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TO

DONALD MACAULAY

IN THE HOPE THAT
MEETING IN THESE AND SIMILAR PAGES
SO MANY OF

HIS BRETHREN

AMONGST THEM BEING

DONNE, HERBERT, TRAHERNE, STERNE,
HERRICK, TAYLOR, SWIFT, HOOKER,
BURNET, LEWIS CARROLL
AND
THE VENERABLE BEDE

IT MAY OCCUR TO HIM TO WRITE
A BOOK HIMSELF

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Preface

THESE papers are selections from a series contributed weekly, without intermission, to the *New Statesman* since April, 1913. I do not feel that the responsibility for reprinting them rests on my shoulders; I trust that where it does rest it will rest lightly. I shall have done all I hope to do if I have produced the sort of book that one reads in, without tedium, for ten minutes before one goes to sleep.

The pseudonym " Solomon Eagle," I may explain, is not intended to posit any claim to unusual wisdom or abnormally keen sight. The original bearer of the name was a poor maniac who, during the Great Plague of London, used to run naked through the street, with a pan of coals of fire on his head, crying " Repent, repent."

This preface was written for, and printed in, the first series of these reprints. As it is accurate and I have nothing to add to it, I thought it would do again now. S. E.

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Books in General

[Second Series]

The Descendants of Shakespeare

ON April 23, 1919 (Shakespeare's birthday), I looked at the front page of the *Daily News*. I read there that the Italians had decided to take no further part in the discussions on the Adriatic problem, their view being formed; I learned, also that the Roumanians had invaded Hungary. This done I turned, as a man will, to the back page, which was covered with photographs. There were photographs of aeroplanes, of soldiers, of a lord and his son, of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau; and my eye roamed over them, until it was suddenly caught, as a bird's by a snake, by two bald and bearded human heads side by side. "On the left," I read, "is a photograph of Mr. Alfred Thomas Shakespeare Hart, of Lichfield, and on the right a portrait of Shakespeare, whose lineal descendant he is. The likeness is very striking." It is also very striking that a journalist could have published without more comment than this two portraits of two gentlemen of whom the later cannot possibly be a lineal descendant of Shakespeare, and the earlier is most unlikely to be Shakespeare himself. Any likeness which may exist between the two busts — and it is

true that Mr. A. T. S. Hart has a bald and rounded forehead, a little pointed beard and an expanse of collar which vie with those pertaining to the Portrait (of, probably, an Italian) — is therefore not important.

Otherwise it would be very interesting. Even the remotest relative of Shakespeare must have a fascination about him: doubly strong, if we could feel sure that the dramatist's traits, by some far-reaching Mendelian sport, had been repeated in him. To the lineal descendants or collaterals of other poets no such interest seems to attach. There are Coleridges and Wordsworths in plenty fulfilling various useful functions, but their names give us only a mild thrill. If the present Lord Byron and the present Lord Tennyson were walking down Bond street together, the public would be no more excited than they are when the Duke of Wellington or Lord Nelson writes a letter to the *Times* or Mr. Dickens, K.C., rises in the Courts. A lineal descendant of Shakespeare would be the most exciting descendant on earth, more to be envied than the posterity of Confucius and Mahomet, each still greatly honoured in their own climes. But Mr. Alfred Thomas Shakespeare Hart is not a lineal descendant of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare had three children, Hamnet (who died young), Judith Quiney, and Susannah Hall. Judith had three children who died young and with-

out issue. Susannah, wife of an eminent physician, and hostess (at New Place) of Queen Henrietta Maria, had one only daughter, Elizabeth. Elizabeth, Shakespeare's solitary grandchild, married, first, Thomas Nash, by whom she had no children, and then (Sir) John Barnard of Abington Manor, by whom also she had no children. Lady Barnard died in February, 1669–'70 and she was the last of Shakespeare's "lineal descendants." The family of Hart (to which I presume Mr. Alfred Thomas Shakespeare Hart, of Lichfield, belongs) is descended from Shakespeare's sister Joan, who married a Hart. To these Harts Lady Barnard bequeathed what is known as Shakespeare's Birthplace, which was in their occupation and which they had turned into an inn. The inn existed until 1846; the Harts sold it in 1806. Sir Sidney Lee quotes William Shakespeare Hart (1778–1834) as saying: "My grandfather used to obtain a great deal of money by showing the premises to strangers who used to visit them." There are advantages, as well as lustre, in being descended from Shakespeare's sister; but it is not the same thing as being a lineal descendant.

The last lineal descendant to be discovered by the Press was announced in the *Morning Post* ten years ago. He was Mr. Charlemagne K. Hopper, an American then staying at the Carlton Hotel. His home was in the rising town of Bismarckville, Mo., where he dealt in "wheat both white and red, and of

both spring and autumn varieties, maize or Indian corn, oats, rye, buckwheat of every variety, seed corn, and bearded barley," and he had " the *entrée* to the most exclusive coteries of Albany and Buffalo." Mr. Hopper's story was that Lady Barnard had a studiously concealed, illegitimate daughter Anne, who was ancestor of the Pooke family, whose connection with Mr. Hopper had been traced by " Mr. Cohen, a charming and cultivated genealogist, whose business is mainly with America and the Colonies." The last of the Pookes had, it seemed, left a daughter, Cassiopeia, who married the Rev. Mr. Aesop Hopper, a minister of the Hicksite persuasion in Cincinnati. The announcement was taken seriously by evening papers, who sent reporters hurriedly round to the Carlton Hotel to interview the Cygnet of Avon. But Mr. Hopper was merely an invention of Mr. Belloc's: his story may still be read in the volume of collected essays called *On Everything.*

We are certain, as far as we can be certain of anything of this sort, that Lady Barnard left no children and no descendants. But her husband's family is still going strong, and there is at least one living Barnard who has contributed to the Shakespeare discussion. This is Mr. Finch Barnard, who published recently a booklet which he called *Science and the Soul,* but which was in reality chiefly concerned with the genealogical glories of his family. He, as a Barnard, is not having the Baconian theory; but he

says that it is quite obvious that Shakespeare of Stratford never wrote the plays. "The real William Shakespeare," he says, "was a fast déclassé," and he seems to imagine that this is enough ground for saying that the author of Shakespeare was one of the Barnards. "There is small probability of a love match, and it is possible that Sir John Barnard married Shakespeare's grand-daughter for his second wife, partly in order to acquire the different MSS. of which the actors were probably allowed possession for stage purposes." The suggestion is that Sir John destroyed all the Shakespeare manuscripts, as some of them were too licentious to see the light of day.

Francis Feeble and Barnardine are both satires by the fast déclassé of his relative Francis Barnard. Silence and Slender "owe the same original"; "the venom of the Author of Shakespeare sticks at nothing." It will have been deduced by now that Mr. Finch Barnard is a little too interested in his family. How interested we begin to realize when he leaves Shakespeare and heads a chapter:

"Christianity and the Barnards

"Some Historical and Genealogical Evidences of the Descent of the Barnards and Finches from Charlemagne and from Adam."

S. Bernard was a Barnard; so was S. Francis of

Assisi. They were both descended from the Emperor Charlemagne. S. Francis "was in his youth a leader of his young fellow nobles of Assisi; he turned from profligate to priest. In many ways a true Barnard." Charlemagne came from Adam through Askenaz, a German giant:

"Askenaz was the son of Gomer, who was son of Japhet, eldest son of Noah, and elder branch to the Jews. Aventinus, however, makes Askenaz a fourth son of Noah. This great family was represented in England by the ancient Barnard and Finch family."

"Where," proceeds Mr. Barnard, "would Shakespeare or any other of our literature in Western Europe have been without the Barnards and the monasteries?" There was Charles Martel, there were Roland and Oliver. But, examining the genealogy of a greater still, he says:

"The great and mystic significance attaches to the name of Barnard in regard to life and religion, and the mysterious relations between spiritual and animal life. . . . There is not only a spiritual lien and a pedigreal between themselves, but probably also a blood, as well as a spiritual, tie with Jesus Christ."

This is the sort of thing that happens to people who are too enthusiastic about their ancestors.

The Diary of Charles Pooter

IN an outlandish place a man, who had recently seen a newspaper, told me that Mr. Weedon Grossmith was dead. I had as I frequently have, *The Diary of a Nobody* with me; and I have read it again with that added respect that one has for a good book when its author is recently dead; for the book has now, at this latest re-reading, obviously survived its author, and passed one more mark on the road towards being a classic.

One frequently, in reviews (though, happily, not so frequently as one did ten years ago), finds a book described as " a slice of life." If the term were correctly applied it would be all very well; books which accurately reflect daily life are a very good sort of books. But, in practice, when we find a book described as " a slice of life " we know that what we are to expect is in fact something far other. It will be a novel in which, probably, great care will have been taken about the representation of material objects and of character. But the material objects will, usually, be grimy, and the characters will invariably be weak. Nobody will (although, in "real life," people often do) lead a happy existence or even die an honourable death. Nobody will marry the person he or she ought to marry, nobody will have the

strength to resist any temptation or to dare any decisive action, nobody will laugh (save bitterly), nobody will make festival or feel the sun. The term "a slice of life" applied to a book certainly advises us that we need not fear (if we are disposed to fear) any "romantic nonsense," but it also promises us that we shall read about people far more uniformly miserable and impotent than the generality of men, and that, whatever the place selected for the termination of the narrative, it shall not be a place at which the outlook of any of the principal characters is promising. They will be dead, disgraced, debauched and dipsomaniac, and lucky if they have avoided suicide.

Yet, as I say, the term has been perverted. For myself, I should be far more inclined to apply it to *The Diary of a Nobody* than to most of the books that are usually accorded it. This work was written by George and Weedon Grossmith, and illustrated by the latter. It first appeared in *Punch* under the editorship of Burnand (who suggested its title), and was expanded before republication in book form. The realist may complain that the end is somewhat forced; that all the members of the Pooter family are left too simultaneously fortunate. But I do not think that he could complain of anything else; unless of that faint touch of caricature, that slight heightening, that discreet selection, which are necessary if we are to reflect the actual without being boring. The book purports to be the diary of Mr. Charles

Pooter, of Brickfield Terrace, Holloway, whose ambition is realized when (half-way through the book) he becomes a senior clerk in the firm of Perkupp, which he has faithfully served for twenty-one years. Diaries by more important persons record visits to Windsor and troubles in the Cabinet; this one records (and the events were as important to the Pooters as other events were to Lady Euphemia Regesan or Lord Zox) visits to Acton and Sutton and troubles with the laundress, the plumber and the butcher. Around Mr. and Mrs. Charles Pooter circle a numerous body: their son Lupin Pooter, Mrs. James (of Sutton), Mr. Franching (of Peckham), Mr. Gowing (of the velveteen jacket), Mr. Cummings (the veteran tricyclist), Miss Daisy Mutlar, Mr. Murray Posh (of Posh's hats), Sarah the housemaid, and others. Their actions and reactions are, I think, far more faithfully described than Zola would have described them, and I am not alone in thinking that it will carry the name of Grossmith down the ages.

The Diary of a Nobody was first published as a book in 1892. There were two subsequent editions in 1894, but it was another eleven years before the fourth edition was called for in 1905. Five more years, and in 1910 Mr. Arrowsmith issued a pocket edition with re-engraved drawings, the best and most portable edition to possess. The sale in eighteen years had not been great, but the publisher had, quite justifiably, the feeling that the book's audience was a

good if not a large one, and that time would widen it. He was able to preface to the 1910 edition letters from Lord Rosebery and Mr. Birrell, and an extract from an essay by Mr. Belloc. That these three all happen to be persons in whom political interests join with literary is a coincidence; the book has no political bearing at all, though sociologists of a remote future may treat it as a document (far more accurate because less lopsided than, say, the novels of Gissing) recording what London lower-middle-class life was like in the eighteen-nineties. But the three *have* things in common all the same. They all like, and practise, irony; each admires, and possesses, a clear English style; each is superior to the contemporary fashion in books and likes things old and new; and each has shown a fondness for odd character.

Lord Rosebery wrote to say that he had probably "purchased and given away more copies than any living man." The book was so familiar to him that the keen edge of his discrimination had worn off and he was incapable of a reasoned criticism of it. "But," he concluded, "I regard any bedroom I occupy as unfurnished without a copy of it." Mr. Birrell said, "I dare not tell you my view of Charles Pooter. I rank him with Don Quixote. It is a matter of great pride with me and all in this house, that our name is borne by one of the characters in this bit of immortality — by an illiterate charwoman, it is true, who never touched a book — but what of

that? I am *there.*" Mr. Belloc's tribute, from an essay *On People in Books* (he has celebrated the work elsewhere, as also that neglected modern classic, *The Wallet of Kai Lung*), is noble:

"Take, for instance, that immoderately common type, among the most common of God's creatures, which I will call 'the Silent Fool,' the man who hardly ever talks, and when he does, says something so overwhelmingly silly that one remembers it all one's life. I can recollect but one Silent Fool in modern letters, but he comes in a book which is one of the half-dozen immortal achievements of our time, a book like a decisive battle, or like the statue of John the Baptist at South Kensington, a glory for us all. I mean *The Diary of a Nobody.* In that you will find the silent Mr. Padge, who says 'That's right' — and nothing more."

Mr. Belloc's statement is not quite literally true, I think. On the first and most important occasion, when he occupied (and refused to leave even when tempted by food) the best arm-chair, Mr. Padge did certainly contribute nothing to the conversation save an infrequent (but, I contend, always apt and relevant) "That's right." But we have just one more example of his speech. Mr. Belloc forgot Mr. Padge's reappearance at the East Acton Volunteer Ball:

"I assisted Carrie and her newly-formed acquaintance, who said her name was Lupkin, to some cham-

pagne; also myself, and handed the bottle to Mr. Padge to do likewise, saying, 'You must look after yourself.' He replied: 'That's right,' and poured out half a tumbler and drank Carrie's health, as he said, 'with her worthy lord and master.'"

"We had," adds Mr. Pooter, "some splendid pigeon-pie, and ices to follow." But poor Mr. Pooter! He thought the refreshments were all a part of the show to which he had been invited. They were not. They were extras. The waiter presented him with a bill for £3 os. 6d. (including sixpence for a cigar for Mr. Padge), which he could not quite meet; and his taking a cab without any money resulted in a row with the cabman and a long, dreary trudge. "We had to walk home in the pouring rain, nearly two miles, and when I got in I put down the conversation I had with the cabman, word for word, as I intend writing to the *Telegraph* for the purpose of proposing that cabs should only be driven by men under government control, to prevent civilians being subjected to the disgraceful insult and outrage that I had had to endure." Is that not a typical slice of life?

Thomas Traherne

A BORROWED house. Sun all day. The first sulphur butterflies on the first flowers. I have not read anything for several days. I have talked no word about literature, its present position and future prospects. For all I have heard to the contrary, the whole body of British authors has suddenly been wiped out by a plague — which should certainly work to the advantage of the single survivor, who has long stood in need of a real opportunity. Anyhow, what with one thing and another, the usually teeming brain was not teeming at all. So in I went to see what I could find. I came out with a beautiful large white mock-vellum copy of the late Mr. Dobell's *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne, B.D.,* 1636(?)–1674. It is some time since I read that strangely resurrected man. I thought I would have another look at him; or, in more professional language, revise my estimate.

There is, however, many a slip. No sooner had I sat down than I perceived that the owner, who had presumably possessed the book since 1903, had not cut the pages. And these were no ordinary pages. They were made of incredibly stout paper — incredible, that is, in these days. Tops and sides, they

were as firm as rocks. And I have no knife. No doubt somewhere on the premises there was a basket full of knives. There always is; but "somewhere" is not the same thing as here. Oh, why, why do they sell books like this? There are books whose pages you can open with a match, replacing the match, when broken, with a new one. This was not one of them; and in any case the pages were not likely to have become so reconciled to the use of substitutes as to yield good-humouredly to the broad, smooth beam of a patent benzine lighter. Hairpins, when accessible, have been known to do good work; but I don't see a hairpin getting through these. My thumb, if employed as it has so often been, would simply tear these pages out by the roots, and probably make many of them difficult to read; even my little finger, lean as it is on the rations, would be useless. Old letters? These pages laugh at them. A pocket of postcards would go nowhere; one edge would turn the sharpest cutting blade that serviceable postcard e'er displayed. It certainly ought to be stopped. At the very least the top edges should be cut and gilt. If there be an advantage — and I admit the charm once the job is done — to have rough edges, let the manufacturers do the extra work needed. To sell the public an unopened book is to sell them a half-manufactured article. You might as well sell them envelopes without any gum on them. If publishers ever go into bookshops to buy — I have no evidence that they do — has it never occurred to them that other cus-

tomers' behaviour is precisely like their own? Are they incapable of generalizing that they should have failed to realize that a man who picks up an unopened book by an unfamiliar author tends — even when he is at liberty to slit the leaves — to look only at the few pages that are completely exposed, and to give the sheltered pages, at the most, one or two oblique squints? How many masterpieces have I ignored because of this vile practice of publishing books in locked chests that have to be burst open! How often have the really great passages of a book I have handled been hermetically sealed whilst I have misjudged the author by more accessible banalities!

But at last ingenuity and hard work laid Traherne bare before me. I found that my previous opinion that Traherne was, as a rule, too awkward, too dull, and too monotonous to be placed anywhere near Crashaw and Vaughan was an opinion I am not likely to abandon. More; I think the fact that the claim was made for him when Mr. Dobell first published those two-hundred-years-lost manuscripts has probably led many to give him less than his due. For a great part of him is repetitive; his imagery is seldom rich; his language is usually abstract and diffuse; and his best things have to be looked for. The glory of God was his object; he kept his eye too directly and exclusively on the object for a man who writes a large number of poems. Much of his work is little more than versified prose, prose like that of Feltham's *Resolves* or his own, often most moving and

eloquent, *Centuries of Meditations.* And the life has gone out of the prose; never do you get anything so "atmospheric" and so touching as those recollections in the *Centuries,* such as that on his young innocence, which opens:

"The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never should be reaped nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold: the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees, when I saw them first through one of the gates, transported and ravished me; their sweetness and unusual beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The Men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal Cherubims! And young men glittering and sparkling angels, and maids strange seraphic creatures of life and beauty! Boys and girls tumbling in the street were moving jewels: I knew not that they were born or should die. But all things abided eternally as they were in their proper places. Eternity was manifest in the Light of the Day, and something infinite behind everything appeared, which talked with my expectation and moved my desire. The City seemed to stand in Eden or to be built in Heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine, their clothes and gold and silver were mine, as much as their sparkling eyes, fair skins, and ruddy faces. The skies were mine,

and so were the sun and moon and stars, and all the world was mine; and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it. I knew no churlish proprieties, nor bounds nor division, but all proprieties and divisions were mine, all treasures and the possessors of them. So that with much ado I was corrupted, and made to learn the dirty devices of this world, which now I unlearn, and become, as it were, a little child again that I may enter into the Kingdom of God."

It is strange that neither his editor nor Traherne himself should have perceived that it was sheer anticlimax to follow this beautiful, this sounding and affecting prose with a poem "based on it" like *The Approach:*

"O Lord, I wonder at Thy Love,
Which did my Infancy so early move,
But more at that which did forbear,
And move so long, tho' slighted many a year;
But most of all, and last that Thou
Thyself shouldst me convert, I scarce know how.

Thy Gracious Motions oft in vain
Assaulted me: my Heart did hard remain
Long time: I sent my God away,
Grieved much that He could not impart His joy.
I careless was, nor did regard
The End for which He all those Thoughts prepared."

The life, the music, the colour, the communicated emotion even, have gone during the effort to write foot-rule rhymed verse, for which Traherne had little gift. He was a saint, he was sensitive, he loved beauty, he had a fine intellect and a natural gift of language; so that accidental great things were bound to appear in his poems. But I would give almost all of them for a few pages of his prose or of that strange poetical prose of the *Christian Ethics,* which in places, as Mr. Dobell observes, startlingly anticipates Whitman both in manner and matter — which we should not have expected a Caroline clergyman to do. *Christian Ethics* is one of the rarest of seventeenth-century books. Why does not some one reprint it?

Scientific Management for Pegasus

IT was very kind of a friend to send me a copy of *The Editor,* an American "Journal of Information for Literary Workers." It is published at Ridgewood, New Jersey, and it is apparently of respectable age. But I had never seen a copy before, and I am sorry I hadn't. It is a perfectly serious trade journal. It caters for manufacturers of literature, just as the *Iron and Steel Trades Journal* and *The Undertaker's Journal* do for ironmasters and interment experts.

The first article contains advice to poetical beginners. It is by Ella Randall Pearce, who describes herself as "a versifier of many seasons, with enough acceptances on record to soothe the hurt of uncounted rejection slips." She has "learned the requirements of many of these publishing houses," and has "trained the Muse to feed on ginger-snaps occasionally instead of angel-food and ambrosia"; and she has found the composition of four-line verses for post-cards "a pleasant and profitable side-line." She gives several useful tips. "Rules of rhyme and metre" must be observed; but "even the tender addresses to 'Mother,' 'Father,' 'Dear Wife,'

'Friend o' Mine,' etc., should carry a cheerful, heart-warming quality."

"Another editorial warning is this: 'Nothing trite.' What can poet say that poet has not said before? Nothing, perhaps; but one must find a fairly new way of saying it to draw the pay checks. One dollar for a four-line verse seems to be the usual payment; although a few publishing houses pay more, and some — may they live to repent! — pay less. Especially clever ideas sometimes bring higher prices. I have received two dollars each for couplets or short prose sentiments, and five dollars for verses of six or eight lines; and I have also accepted a check for ten dollars for two dozen miscellaneous sentiments from a publisher who buys them in dozens when he buys at all."

The principle of the magazine is that the successes of the trade should give their juniors the benefit of their experience. After an article by a magazine photograph expert, who says that last summer he "made some comic insect pictures" which interested the editor of *Photo-Era,* we come to Helen B. Johnson on "Genius and the Market." This lady says that when the inspiration is on you, you must write without thinking of the market:

"Forget there is a market. Never mind what the editor wants. Forget him! If grammar bothers you, forget it! Rhetoric, grammar, syntax,

spelling, punctuation — push them all in the background and let them take care of themselves. Make way for the king. Just let the king rule, and be as lawless about it as you are inspired to be. Get the idea, while it is on the wing, and capture it with your individuality. When the blood is cool again, the heart and mind in harmonious vibration, deliberately turn your coat and make your obeisance to king market."

And you should always have several inspirations in progress at once:

"Did you ever make a dish of pop-corn? You never did by popping one at a time. The best way is to put in a handful and keep it circulating over a hot fire. Then the corn pops. Now, get more than one idea into your popper, and be sure they have as much life in them as each kernel of corn. Keep them circulating in the hotbed of the market, and they will pop—checks your way."

There follows "Arriving: How These Writers Did It"; a "symposium," as some call it, or "a round table story-fest," as it is called here, of the members of the Missouri Writers' Guild. Maude Radford Warren says: "For several years I had been writing Henry James things for which there seemed to be no market." Being short of money when "down town" once, she went into a cheap restaurant:

" That was the first time I had ever come in contact with the ' people,' as I had always lived in a university atmosphere. They interested me wonderfully, and the result was *The Wearing of the Green.*"

Randall Parrish says he sold his first book for $3000, at the age of forty-three. " I went into the writing game in the cold-blooded way I would start in any business," continued Mr. Parrish. " I do not try to write literature; I write books to sell." And Mr. William H. Hamby, " one of Missouri's most prolific writers," says that the first sum he earned by his pen was $1.50 for an article on " How to Write."

" I thought it was worth more, but I was glad to get that, and bought a red tie and some silk socks with the money."

Whereafter, a somewhat soberer article on " Foreign Local Colour."

An " Open Letter to Authors," by Frank R. Adams, begins:

"FELLOWS:—Do you ever find yourself, as I often find myself, high and dry, with lots of time to write, and not a plot in the locker? If you do, read on. Otherwise turn to the automobile advertisements. This is not for you."

The remedy is a note-book, in which plots should be jotted down:

"When I am absolutely stuck for an idea and the groceryman is beginning to think he is stuck for my last month's bill, I turn desperately to my dog-eared vest-pocket memoranda."

Once the plot has been fixed:

"The rest is mere machine work of course. I write my story or article, as the case may be, and then after lunch take my wife for a ride in our 1910 caracole."

Nellie B. Mace is more idealistic. "Writing, as a vocation, had not possessed my plans . . . until four years ago, when, by a happy leading, an opportunity was opened to me to do regular work in one of the departments of a certain widely-circulated publication." She finds that "writing pays," and although "I do not aspire to hang in the hall of fame," the gratitude of readers whose troubles have been assuaged by her is additional payment. "The Plot and Idea Forum" is followed by "The Literary Market," in which "Wants" are given publicity, the things required ranging from "sermonettes" to "Jewish juvenile plays." The editor of a paper at Salem, Mass., writes:

"We could use a good political story if we could

get one that has something in it besides a paving graft exposé in which the political boss tries to use his beautiful daughter as a lever to pry the young mayor or the young newspaper editor from the straight and narrow."

And, finally, there is "The Experience Exchange," in which readers give information about editors and papers, such as "Miss Fassett, of *The Woman's-World,* is one of the most courteous of editors; it pays to cultivate her acquaintance," and "The managing editor of *Today's,* Miss Eberle, is very courteous and writes nice letters of criticism. Quite a welcome change from the last incumbent."

Amongst the books advertised at the end are *Points About Poetry,* by Donald G. French; 1001 *Places to Sell Manuscripts;* and *The Fiction Factory,* by John Milton Edwards, who has "made more than $1,000,000.00 with a typewriting machine and a thinking apparatus." I am informed that a recent issue contained an article on "Hymn Writing as a Side-line."

The above is all true.

The New Browning Poems

SIR FREDERIC KENYON has edited a whole volume of *New Poems by Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.* Ten of the "new" poems included appeared in the Centenary Edition of Robert Browning, but there are nineteen others by him that have never before appeared in a collected edition, and six by Mrs. Browning. Many of these were found amongst the MSS. dispersed at the recent Browning sale. Sir Frederic naturally feels some compunction about publishing poems that their authors refrained from putting into their books. "One might wish," he says,

"that the unpublished verses of both poets had been destroyed by them out of hand when once the decision had been taken not to publish them. Such waifs and strays are a permanent difficulty to editors. If the author is sufficiently eminent, publication of everything of his that remains above ground is eventually inevitable, and an editor is torn between the natural desire to make his edition complete, and his equally natural reluctance to print matter which is not worthy of its author, and which the author himself did not consider worthy of publication. The ultimate solution is probably some limbo of an ap-

pendix, which can be searched once for all by the curious and then left to its obscurity."

This is sound enough theory; but here we have the volume in the familiar dark mud-coloured binding (I speak descriptively and not at all derisively) of the old Collected Edition. And very few of the new poems are better saved than lost.

There is a certain interest about *The First Born of Egypt* — astonishing blank verse for a boy of thirteen; *Helen's Tower* is a tolerable sonnet which might be by any one; and the unfinished fragment, *Æschylus' Soliloquy,* is really fine. It is the day of Æschylus' death "at the hands of a tortoise dropped by an eagle," as the schoolboy put it. He sits, "an old and solitary man," on a Sicilian plain, hoping to evade the death by something falling from above that had been predicted for him. He hears the life of men in the distance like the droning of a bee at sunset:

Ay, and that bee's hum,
The buzzing fly and mouthing of the grass
Cropped slowly near me by some straying sheep
Are strange to me with life — and separate from me
The outside of my being — I myself
Grow to silence, fasten to the calm
Of inorganic nature . . . sky and rocks —
I shall pass on into their unity
When dying down into impersonal dusk.

Ah, ha — these flats are wide!
The prophecy which said the house would fall
And thereby crush me, must bring down the sky,
The only roof above me where I sit
Or ere it prove its oracle today.
Stand fast, ye pillars of the constant Heavens
As Life doth in me — I who did not die
That day in Athens when the people's scorn
Hissed toward the sun as if to darken it
Because my thoughts burned too much for the eyes
Over my head, because I spoke my Greek
Too deep down in my soul to suit their case.
Who did not die to see the solemn vests
Of my white chorus round the thymele
Flutter like doves, and sweep back like a cloud
Before the shrill-lipped people. . . .

Except for these, the new poems by Robert Browning are either failures or trifles. There are rhyming *tours de force,* of which the best is the frequently quoted quatrain:

Venus, sea-froth's child,
Playing old Gooseberry,
Marries Lord Rosebery
To Miss de Rothschild.

As I have heard it, by the way, the word " Hannah " has taken the place of the word " Miss." There are also odd squibs and album-pieces of the sort that no great poet would commit if he thought they

would be reprinted after his death. The Mrs. Browning poems are no better worth preserving. A line from *The Enchantress* and another from *Leila, a Tale,* will convey an idea of their nature more exactly than any words of mine:

A little bark is sleeping on the billow

"It is," the Father cried, "It is, it is my boy!"

One is reminded of Gilbert's: "It was, it was the cat." "They're right; it *was* the cat."

The Epistle to a Canary is neat, but cannot be mentioned in the same breath with the poetess's *To Flash, My Dog,* with which the public has been familiar for about seventy years. So on the whole one hopes that, in spite of Sir Frederic Kenyon's theory of inevitability, the rest of Mrs. Browning's unpublished works will remain undisturbed in the tomb. She was occasionally a great poet, but the corpus of her inferior verse is already large enough to tax the perseverance of most of her readers.

The most interesting part of the volume (except for *Æschylus' Soliloquy*) is certainly the collection, at the end, of certain criticisms by Miss Barrett upon her future husband's poems. These alone would make the new volume worth having. They are precisely what one would expect from Mrs. Browning. She is down on Browning's bad grammar, on his

obscurities, and, above all, on his rhythmical inequalities. She is always acute, and her position is always defensible; but often, in her passion for restoring missing particles, for smoothing things out and regularizing them, for making Browning softer, she suggests changes (he adopted some of them) that are not improvements. She takes the line (from *The Boy and the Angel*)

Morning, noon, eve and night

and asks if Browning prefers it to

Morning, evening, noon and night.

Or she quotes from *Saul:*

For in the black midtent silence
three drear days

and says characteristically: "A word seems omitted before silence — and the short line is too short to the ear." But her suggestions are sometimes very striking in their rightness; and these notes are an interesting addition to the small body of good material of the sort that exists in English.

Pidgin-English for Germans

KURZES Handbuch fur Neger-Englisch an der Westkuste Afrikas unter besonderer Berucksichtigung von Kamerun: von Gunther v. Hagen, Leutnant in der Kaiserlichen Schutztruppe fur Kamerun. That is the title of a book which a friend of mine, with an eye for something more amusing than helmets or pieces of shell, brought home from the Cameroons. It was always a sore point with the Germans in West Africa that they had to learn pidgin-English to talk to the natives in their own colony. Curiously, pidgin-English was much more widely known in the German Cameroons than in our own neighbouring colonies. The publication in my hands is a primer of pidgin-English for the use of Germans on the West Coast. It is drawn up on the usual word-book model, and gives the English words in German phonetic spelling. The effect is odd.

Food naturally comes first. You get columns like this. (I omit the marks of quantity.)

Blätter	lif	leaf
Bohnen	bins	beans
Butter	bötter	butter
Dosenfleisch	tin-mit	tin-meat

Eine Dose Früchte	won tin fruit	one tin fruits
Gemüse	wedjetebel	vegetable
Käse	dschiss	cheese
Mostrich	möstert	mustard
Sauce	ssos	sauce

After this come more general articles, such as:

Kopftuch	hankis	handkerchief
Spazierstock	woaker-stick	walker-stick (*sic*)
Tischtuch	tebel-klot	table-cloth
Eine Stuck Zeng	won piss klot	one piece cloth

and then parts of the body, such as:

Brust, bauch	belli	belly
Bruste	bobbi	(bob?)
Mund	maus	mouth

"Sponge" in German pidgin-English appears as "spantsch," "toothbrush" as "tuss-brösch," "small-boy" as "ssmoalbeu," "too much" as "tu mötsch," "duck" as "dock-faul," and another animal as "tschakass." "Church" is phonetically metamorphosed into "tschörtsch," and "gottes-lehre" falls to "gott-palawer."

The strangest effects, however, occur when the

useful sentences are reached. They look queerer in the German type, but I don't want to make myself a nuisance to the printer. Here are some of them:

gif mi korn for mei hors.
ei wont fresch mit.
mek onjons for dem Bifstick.
tell dem king, hi ssell mi won faul end tri egs.
tu de, ei no wont ömbrella.
dem weit kot ei tek onli for ssönde.
hi get fiwer, gif him kinin.
ju möst tek dem spir wonteim autsseit for him backsseit.
beu, dem neif bi dörti, bring öser won.
dem mischen-massa scho dem mischen-beu mek buk for dschörmen.
dem dog bi dörti.
ei won't oal haus for won sseit of dem taun, bikosz mi no wont me pipel tif ju szöm ting.
ju mek proper hol raund mei tent, if ren kom for neitteim?

The isolated phrases lead up at last to a regular conversation:

Q. elefant lif for busch?
A. no massa.
Q. böt ei tink, won ssönde bifor jur bröser kill won?
A. jes, böt onli ssmoal won.

The next section is devoted to conversations, " auf dem Kriegsmarsche " and are largely concerned with the commissariat. " Stillge-standen! Augen rechts! " are German remarks introduced freely amid the pidgin-English. Finally, are instructions for the conduct of negotiations, " in einer Faktorei." The answer to a man who tells you he will give you so much tobacco for a shilling is: " dem no bi ennöf, ju möst gif mi tu lif mor."

The author in his Vorwort, wrote that: " Pidgin-English is a makeshift which, in a measurable time will, one may hope, become obsolete, owing to the spread of the German tongue amongst the natives." Alas, for human hopes!

Signor Marinetti's Masterpiece

CURIOUS things seem to get into charitable sales. A little while ago one, in aid of wounded soldiers, was held in the Caledonian Market, and the public flocked to see duchesses spreading their wares on stones usually consecrated to the venders of second-hand tables, chairs, vases, door-knockers, and gas-brackets. Amongst the articles sold on this occasion were a number of books autographed by their authors. Some of these fetched large prices — some of them did not. The latter included a copy of *Mafarka, Le Futuriste,* signed in a fine flowing hand by its author, Signor Marinetti. It has now reached me. Though I had been familiar with many of Signor Marinetti's works, and though I had heard him recite his famous *Siege of Adrianople* with the perspiration pouring down his forehead and his voice growing hoarse from intermittent efforts to imitate the boom of the Bulgarian guns, this novel I had not hitherto read. I have now read it; and I certainly think that the hair, however long, of the lady who sold it would have stood for long on end had she been made acquainted with its contents. I have an idea that, after running into several editions, it was suppressed in France. It certainly deserved to be.

An English translation would not have a lifetime of five minutes. The iridescent hues of *The Rainbow* pale and fade before it.

The book has several prominent characteristics, some of which I need not mention, but undoubtedly the dominant theme is the panegyric of savagery, ferocity, and blood. There is more carnage to the square inch in this book than in any other that I have read; and though it is conceivable that the novels of the Marquis de Sade — to which I have never had access — are still more gruesome, I am inclined to doubt it. I will not sketch the plot — for there is no plot. But I may indicate one or two of the details, so as to give an idea of what Signor Marinetti finds beautiful and amusing. In one chapter there is a great battle between King Mafarka and his brother and an innumerable host of wild desert dogs, which are pounded into a pulp by large stones flung from catapults. Later on, Mafarka's brother, who is newly married, disappears. Mafarka, very concerned, goes to look for him, and finds on the floor of his bedroom a few strips — which are all that is left of the bride — whilst the bridegroom, who has been infected by hydrophobia, sits like an ape on the top of a pillar with strings of foam hanging from his jaws.

But the most striking episode — the most striking mentionable episode — is that in which Mafarka shows a decadent and timid world how it really

ought to deal with its enemies. He assembles his Court in a dimly lit underground chamber. One wall of this chamber is of glass, and forms one side of an enormous tank, communicating, by means of gratings, with the sea overhead. In this tank are collected sharks, octopuses, and all the ugliest and most uncanny fish which infest the oceans of the world. There is a meal; and then, reclining on luxurious cushions, and feeding their senses on the most languorous of scents, the guests watch a somewhat torrid Oriental dance. The chamber is then darkened — though the tank is not — and two of the king's enemies, a fat old man and a thin young one, are shot into the top of the tank struggling. The sharks float up, twist them down, and bite off portions; the bits float up again and bump against the top, whilst the sharks sail round below wondering what has become of their prey. Soon they track it again, and the process recommences. The details of the disintegration, the lines and colours made by the " remains " as they drift and toss through green waters, the horrible quiet movements of the fishes — these are all described with a revolting accuracy which makes one's blood cold. It still haunts my dreams. It was certainly an odd thing to get at a Wounded Allies sale. But I suppose it all brings grist to the mill.

In the end the hero, if he may be so described, goes to something that appears to be heaven in something that looks like an aeroplane — but about

here Signor Marinetti's lyricism gets too confused for my understanding. This was, I believe, the first manifesto of the Futurist School which, before the war, some people took almost seriously. The world before the war must indeed have been a barren place to its author; he had to get what poor sustenance he could out of watching fights with fists at public meetings. Let us hope that he has found slaughter as invigorating and enjoyable as he always said it was.

Fitzgerald's Second Thoughts

THERE have been versions of Omar Khayyam since Fitzgerald's. There have been versions more literal than his, and versions which have included far more than he did of the many hundreds of quatrains which float about the East attached to the name of Omar. But a comparison of other translations with Fitzgerald's is the best means of heightening one's wonder at his supreme genius for translation. Omar is so exceedingly pointed that he is interesting even in the baldest version; but Fitzgerald made him a great English poet. This is all commonplace, but commonplaces would cease to be recognized as such if they were not occasionally repeated, and one must do one's duty. The occasion of these remarks is the appearance of a beautiful variorum edition of Fitzgerald's *Omar,* by Mr. Frederick Evans.

Generally speaking, variorum editions appeal more to the scholar than to the ordinary reading person, who prefers to " go straight on " and is content with " any good edition." Even where writers have been in the habit of touching-up their work at every fresh issue the alterations are not usually so extensive as to command the attention of any one but the " professed student " : a description normally

applied to the kind of person to whom the " Corpus Poetarum " is really the " Corpus Vile Poetarum." But the case of Fitzgerald's work is certainly an exception. Fitzgerald's modifications in his text were so extensive and so varying in quality that an acquaintance with a single edition of it is really quite inadequate.

Mr. Evans's edition gives, " for the first time collectively, each Stanza in the full text of each of its versions, as given in the four editions (1859, 1868, 1872, 1879), that contain any differences in text." Each stanza has a whole page to itself; if it appears in one edition only, then the spaces that variant stanzas, had there been any in other editions, would have occupied are left blank. The whole history of each stanza, therefore, can be seen at a glance without reference to notes or appendices. The nature and extent of Fitzgerald's modifications may be illustrated by the life-story of the very first stanza. In the first edition this appeared as:

Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight;
And lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultan's Turret in a Noose of Light.

In the second edition it was changed to:

Wake! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night;

And, to the field of Heaven ascending, strikes
The Sultan's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

In the third and fourth editions it becomes:

Wake! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and strikes
The Sultan's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

The first draft of edition three having begun:

Wake! For the Sun before him into Night
A Signal flung that put the Stars to flight.

This is certainly one of the cases in which the first version was unquestionably the best. There are others; but the cases in which improvements were made were more numerous; and although Fitzgerald in only two or three instances left a quatrain unchanged in all his editions there was point enough in his alteration to acquit him of an unnecessary itch for tinkering.

Of the stanza quoted the first version is the one that has passed into common speech. But in another even better-known quatrain the " current " version is the last.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread — and Thou . .

originally ran:

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse — and Thou.

In yet another familiar instance it is difficult to choose between the two principal variations. In the first version we get:

What, without asking, hither hurried Whence?
And, without asking, Whither *hurried hence!*
Another and another Cup to drown
The Memory of this Impertinence.

But in the fourth edition the last two lines run:

Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence!

The first is obviously the more terse, more vigorous and more amusing; but the other would commend itself to some as being more placid, less abrupt in transition and working in the additional point of Prohibition.

Each man can make his selection of versions for himself. For me, I have made my own. But there is one stanza at which I cannot help smiling in all its forms. It is the one which contains the statement that the Lion and the Lizard keep the Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep. When-

ever I look at it I think of a skit play which St. John Hankin wrote, and in which, after a heated exchange of words, the Lion demanded of the Lizard: "Are you keeping this Court or am I?" A thing of this sort is enough to make one defile the grave, if one could identify it, of the man who invented burlesque. That, of course, is the reason why I give it further publicity.

Property in Proper Names

A MULTITUDE of British novelists breathed a sigh of relief when it became known that a British jury had turned down very emphatically the claim for damages, brought against Mr. George Moore by a music-hall artist named Louis Seymour. Mr. Moore produced a new edition of his book, *A Modern Lover,* under the new name of *Lewis Seymour and Some Women.* The real Mr. Seymour alleged that he had suffered considerable annoyance owing to this. Some very unpleasant things were said about the book in the course of the action. Counsel for the plaintiff made a reference to " a mass of salacious and disgusting details which rendered the book unique in pornography," and the judge jumped hard both upon the hero and upon the book. Many people perhaps will share the judge's views of some of Mr. Moore's literary efforts, and some perhaps would be happy to see Mr. Moore mulcted anywhere and for any reason. But no sensible man can help feeling that the jury was perfectly right when it said: (1) that no reasonable person would think that the Lewis Seymour of Mr. Moore's book was a portrait of a real person; and (2) that no reasonable person would think that Mr. Moore's book referred to the plaintiff. One cannot help feeling, in fact, that the

plaintiff must have been a pretty cool customer to bring the action at all, for the book was written long ago, and the real Mr. Seymour only took his present name a few days ago, his father's name being Kempner! There therefore could be no possible suggestion that Mr. Moore had maliciously attacked him or had even heard of him when he wrote.

I remember two other cases of the sort. In the first case a paper in the North published a sketch in which a character named, I think, Artemus Jones, was exhibited in an unfavourable light. It was held to be proved that plaintiff was liable to suffer serious damage from the libel, and he was awarded a large sum of money. A year or two later a Sunday newspaper ran a serial story in which one of the less exemplary characters bore a conspicuous and unusual name which happened to be that of a gentleman who lived in much the same professional world as the fictitious character. Here, again, heavy damages were given. Even those cases caused novelists qualms, for it was evident that coincidence might go far and the most innocent of men might possibly libel and, if he were accidentally close enough in his description, seriously injure, a total stranger. But if the enterprising Mr. Seymour had won his case, one simply does not know what novelists would have done. They would still presumably have been all right with their heroes and heroines — at least with those that were well up to the usual novelist's standard of impeccability. But as for the ordinary

light and shade people, and still more the villains, the weaklings, the profligates, the criminals, the murderers, the blackmailers, the coiners, the spies and the adventuresses, it would have been utterly impossible to name them at all without imperilling one's household and the whole future of one's wife and children.

For unusual names are no guarantee of immunity whatever. You may work as hard as you like in the regions of the grotesque and the unlikely, but when you have concocted names like Arabel Pickels or Marmaduke Honeyblossom Whoopingnose, the chances are that from Clapton or Sydenham or Blackpool or Merthyr Tydvil some Dread Unknown will start up and ask why his or her name, long known and honoured in the locality, has been thus pilloried. Dickens's names look preposterous enough, but he used to get them out of the London Directory. If he had made them up out of his head he would probably have found them in the London Directory afterwards. No name is entirely impossible in this country, as I realized recently when, walking along the main street of a small cathedral city, I observed over a draper's shop the almost incredible cognomen of Gotobed. The only people who do occasionally produce an English name that probably is unreal are French novelists. They try to do the thing correctly. They consequently construct their English surnames out of English surnames that they have seen. But they very often put together sylla-

bles which, though quite common, are for some reason quite incompatible. They have seen, for example, such names as Oldham and Hawkins, and they will come out with an English governess called Agnes Oldkins, and a sporting English baronet with the highly improbable designation of Sir John Hawham. But even here I do not feel that I am on perfectly safe ground, and I should not really be surprised if after this appears letters reached me from eager readers in the backwoods assuring me that in their districts the name of Oldkins and Hawham are and always have been most common in the parish register.

Common names, one need scarcely say, would have been no protection whatever if Mr. Seymour had won his action. It was pointed out in Court that there were three persons of the name of Louis Seymour in the London Directory. I do not see why, if one Mr. Seymour had won, another Mr. Seymour should not — assuming that one of the others were the sort of person who would bring an action — have had a go himself and won also; or why, for that matter, twenty Lewis Seymours from all over the kingdom should not have come in turn to Court, alleged in turn that their private lives had been embittered by the poisonous emissions of Mr. Moore's pen, and secured seriatim such damages that in the end Mr. Moore would have had to sell Moore Hall (thus escaping from the dispute about the graziers) and go to America steerage in order

to begin a new life in a place where he was not known. Still worse would have been the fate of novelists who should have called the evil-doer John Jones, Henry Smith, William Brown, Edward Williams, or Evan Davies. Claimants would have rushed forward by thousands, and we might even have come to the point at which people would find it worth while to assume the name of Quilp, Raffles, Fagan, Bill Sykes, Svengali, Shylock, or even Cain, in order to sue authors or publishers who appeared prosperous enough to offer a good harvest. In the end novelists would have been driven to calling their people by letters or numbers. We should have read that: "A. B. buried her head in her arms, and wept long and bitterly as she thought of that beautiful day when she and C. D. had sat in bliss under the blue Mediterranean sky and by the side of the blue Mediterranean sea, before that awful day when E. F. and G. H. had come between them"; or that: "No. 1 flung open the door with a shout. As it opened he saw No. 8 and No. 76 in close confabulation over a bundle of papers which the latter hurriedly passed behind his back to No. 2002, though not sufficiently rapidly to escape No. 1's attention." The only alternative would have been for novelists to have given up writing altogether. And, on the whole, I am not sure that this ——

The Inferior Poems of Keats

THE Florence Press Keats is one of the most beautiful editions of recent years. The edition is, however, interesting for other reasons. In the first place, Sir Sidney Colvin has put in the newly-discovered poems which he published in the *Times Literary Supplement;* and in the second place, he has arranged the poems for the first time in chronological order. Lord Houghton, it may be added, endeavoured to do that in the edition recently reissued in the "Shilling Bohn Series." Keats owes more to Lord Houghton than to any other editor; but that did not make his lordship's chronology sound or even careful. Sir Sidney Colvin's appears as nearly exact as any editor could make it; where his order is not that of time the deviation is deliberate — for example, he lumps together the slight pieces intended to be funny. The object of his plan is to enable readers to see Keats's development in proper perspective, and to place his feebler works in their proper temporal relation to his masterpieces.

If the edition had no other merits I should use it, if only for its almost perfect print and its total absence of notes. It takes a good deal of effort for a man of Sir Sidney Colvin's learning to restrain him-

self. He is bound to be tempted to explain, for example (in a quite elementary work), that Apollonius must not be confused with Apollinaris or Apenta; or (in a more ambitious edition) that, although Keats in *Lamia* refers to Apollonius as having a bald old crown, Keats's authority, Philostratus, expressly states (in another connection) that the philosopher was exceedingly hairy — in fact, as hairy as a sound vegetarian ought to be. This point, by the by, has not (as far as I am aware) been made by any critic before myself. I present it to Keats's next commentator. At this late date any little extra should be welcome. But at any rate, happily, Sir Sidney Colvin has no use for it; and yet how easy it would have been to write a whole volume of notes if he did not go beyond explaining why he chose to think that certain poems were written in September rather than in October or in January rather than in February.

At the same time I don't think that the chronological arrangement will much increase one's appreciation of Keats. And the reason is that his inferior poems, wherever you may place them in the book, are so infinitely inferior to his best that one almost thinks, as one reads them, that there must have been two Keats, not one Keats. One may object to selections — to *The Golden Book of Ezekiel Peakyblinder* and *The Cream of Christopher Marlowe* — but Keats's worst is such feeble stuff that it is simply not worth having at all. It is not merely a question

of the early poems. Most of his first volume is worthless — though it contains the Chapman Sonnet — but in some of its dullest passages the development of his craft may be observed. But he went on writing much worse things when his powers were fully matured. It is, perhaps, bad luck on him that his jocular verses in letters have been dug up; but the pompous vapidities of *Otho the Great* and the skittish vapidities of the *Cap and Bells* were the results of elaborate efforts made when his genius had reached its culmination. *Otho the Great* is roughly contemporaneous with *Lamia* and comes between the *Ode to a Nightingale* and the *Ode to Autumn*. *Otho* is a full length blank-verse play occupying ninety pages in this edition. Its author had already written in *Hyperion* blank verse equal in places to any in the language. Yet there are scarcely in *Otho* even a dozen lines together of good rhetoric, much less poetry. As he was unused to play-writing one can understand how Keats fell into the trap of Elizabethanism and dealt in Carnage, Wittols and Gulls. But one cannot understand how he disguised himself so completely.

The Cap and Bells is much worse. It is unfinished: that is the only reason it did not come to a bad end. Keats here was deliberately trying to emulate Byron's satiric triumphs. Unfortunately he had no comic ideas, little gift for epigram, a narrow range of contemporary allusion, and could not even tickle the midriff with those polysyllabic or

otherwise eccentric rhymes which are frequently employed by ineffective wags to cover up their resourcelessness and impress a public very much in awe of these properties of the wizard's cave. Now and then you get a stanza of some dignity and vigour. The stanza describing the wedding morning is one such:

The morn is full of holiday; loud bells
With rival clamours ring from every spire;
Cunningly-station'd music dies and swells
In echoing places; when the winds respire,
Light flags stream out like gauzy tongues of fire.
A metropolitan murmur, lifeful, warm,
Comes from the northern suburbs; rich attire
Freckles with red and gold the moving swarm,
While here and there clear trumpets blow a keen
alarm.

This stanza is not quite Keats; but at least it it not the author of *The Eve of St. Agnes* trying to write like the author of *Beppo* and *Don Juan.*

The brief fragment of *King Stephen* is much better. Swinburne thought that it showed that Keats, had he lived, might have been a considerable poetic dramatist. The language here is still Elizabethan. Lines like:

Now may we lift our bruised visors up
And take the flattering freshness of the air —

and

Royal Maud
From the throng'd towers of Lincoln hath look'd down
Like Pallas from the walls of Ilion,
And seen her enemies havock'd at her feet.
She greets most noble Gloucester from the heart —

are simply burlesque Elizabethan. But the muscles of some of the speeches show through their trick'd up clothing; the action moves quickly; and even in the few pages which are all that remain of the play Keats succeeds in the highly difficult feat of making us take an interest in King Stephen.

If, by the way, some of the passages in *King Stephen* hark back too much, there is one at least which appears to hark forward. Royal Maud is discussing the treatment of Stephen, her prisoner-of-war. She is very shocked at the way in which he is being pampered:

My Lord of Chester, is't true what I hear
Of Stephen of Boulogne, our prisoner,
That he, as a fit penance for his crimes,
Eats wholesome, sweet and palatable food
Off Gloucester's golden dishes — drinks pure wine,
Lodges soft?

It is like the accounts we heard of Donington Hall.

One's Favourite Author Defined

A MAN asked me, with mediaeval bluntness, who were my favourite authors. "Oh," I said, "Homer, Dante, &c." This did not satisfy him. "Well," I said, "What do you mean by favourites? I am very fond indeed of Wordsworth." "Yes," he said, "but would you read him in prose on any subject he cared to write about?" "I should think not," I said. "Well, whom would you ?"

It was a new method of approach, and at first I could think of nobody except Mr. Chesterton whom I would read on any subject — though remembering what he had said would be another matter. All the illustrious dead and the notorious living went through my head seriatim, stretching out pale, appealing hands which I could not persuade myself to take. Milton on Church Government? No, I would not be able to read that; I would rather read Sir Thomas Browne on the subject, although I do not think him as great a writer as Milton. Sir Thomas Browne may do as a start; he was odd and sympathetic enough never to bore me. Tennyson on the Needs of the Navy? No, I miss that out, even

when he is writing in verse. Shelley on Proportional Representation? Well! Gibbon on the Needs of Rural Hampshire? Dickens on Metaphysics? Scott on Constitutional History? George Eliot on Rent? Coleridge on the Ego? Or any of them on current Italian politics? As I put all these questions or had them put, I found how limited was my contact with many of the greatest men or, conversely, how limited was their appeal. And it gradually turned out that I had a most peculiar collection of, so to say, intimates, whom I should be happy to read whatever they were writing about and whatever my ignorance — or even theirs! — of the subjects discussed.

There are two living poets who seldom step outside their proper provinces whom I should find engaging on anything. I could read anything (except a few of his longer novels) which was written, or would be written, by Henry James. I could read any conceivable thing by Cobbett, and certainly anything by Charles Lamb, were it even on epistemology or morphology or the scholarship of Mr. Gladstone. Swift is another. He might certainly have written rottenly on Æsthetics but he would beyond question have written about them like a man and a humorist. The same may be said of Dr. Johnson, who, to those who have a feeling for him, could never be dull. I would add Keats, Mr. Max Beerbohm, Shakespeare, and Rabelais. It is a queer collection. In another sense some of them are not

at all very favourite authors. I do not, for instance, read anything of Cobbett's more than once in three years. But when I do pick up a book of his I do not care what it is about and I have no fear of being bored or only half-interested. He is good company whenever and wherever he is called on. And he certainly would have been in the flesh, whereas Wordsworth or Milton, on an off day, would have reduced one to making remarks about the weather — a subject, however, which Wordsworth found abnormally interesting.

Swinburne's Vocabulary

IT has long been a complaint that cheap editions of Swinburne are not obtainable. Mr. Heinemann has now gone some way towards providing one by issuing five small volumes of his poems, containing, respectively, *Poems and Ballads* (I.), *Poems and Ballads* (II. and III.), *Tristram, Atalanta* and *Erechtheus,* and *Songs before Sunrise.* The edition is called the "Golden Pine Edition." At first sight one thinks of a brand of marmalade or of Californian tinned pineapples. Then one notices a design of cones. Presumably somebody desires to forge one more link between Swinburne's name and that of "The Pines," Putney Hill. But even then the "Golden" is a puzzle, for pines, even in Putney, are not conspicuously golden. I give it up.

Except for certain parts of the plays and a few odd poems, these volumes include everything of Swinburne's in verse that any one but a rare enthusiast can want. What a misfortune his diffuseness was. Take even a feeble poem of Swinburne's by itself, and you are struck by his eloquence and ease; but a lot of them together are tiring and monotonous to a degree unequalled by any verse of similar standing. One of the best chapters in Mrs. Mey-

nell's recent *Hearts of Controversy* was that in which, whilst unreservedly admitting the greatness of some of Swinburne's verse and his right to a high place in literature, she analyzed his peculiar weaknesses. He lived on second-hand enthusiasms derived from men living and dead who were the objects of his unreasoning admiration (to do him justice, his enthusiasms were always for somebody whom he thought morally great, noble in character). He out-shouted Mazzini about Italy and Shelley about Liberty. But directly he was left by himself to judge or to feel for himself he felt weakly or judged inconsistently. And to express and illustrate his second-hand thought he had pocketfulls of counters. If he was denouncing, as Mrs. Meynell observes, he denounced everybody in precisely the same words and "Hell" was certain to be one of them. All poets have private vocabularies in some measure. In time some professor of German extraction will count the number of times that various writers use various words, find the "dominant-recurrent" words of each and stigmatize his outlook (or, more likely, his disease) accordingly. But Swinburne's habitual vocabulary (though he had at call an enormous number of words) was scarcely larger than an agricultural labourer's, and he worked it with unparalleled vigour and lack of discrimination. It was a poor sort of thing that could not be described in terms of "foam" "flower," "barren," "salt," "sweet," "sharp," "broken," "token," "light," "fight," "might," and "right" — for many of them hunted

in couples, or even quartets, merely because they happened to rhyme. An out-of-the-way archaism like "guerdon" was used by Swinburne as though it were an ordinary "and," "the," "come" or "go," merely because it made a comfortable rhyme with "burden," and burdens, in his world, were very common.

At this stage I took the *sortes*. Quite honestly I opened a chance volume at a chance page and literally the first thing I saw was this stanza of *Hertha:* —

Though sore be my burden
And more than ye know,
And my growth have no guerdon
But only to grow,
Yet I fail not of growing for lightnings above me or deathworms below.

There we have it; the language half-obscuring the not very remarkable thought. Consonants and vowels could not be more fluidly arranged; the sound as an abracadabra is beautiful; but the songs of mouth and mind do not harmonize — the former chants the other out of hearing. This is so even here in one of his finer poems; in the others there is vox et præterea nihil. I wished consequently that a really perfect selection could be issued. A fairly good one, prepared under Swinburne's own supervision, exists; but a better one is easily conceivable, and his executors and publishers would find it worth their while if they had made one.

Blake and His Myths

WILLIAM BLAKE is a standing temptation. For he was a man of great genius and indisputable sanity, many of whose works are, as his latest critic says, "perhaps the most obscure in the whole range of literature." Ever since people began to realize that the Prophetic Books were something more than the grandiose ravings of a harmless lunatic, armies of students have worked continuously with tables of symbols at their sides searching for the key to the mystery. A great deal has been discovered, largely owing to the efforts of Messrs. Ellis and Yeats; but it is pretty evident by this time that Blake's doctrines will never be propounded as a coherent whole.

M. Berger (a very good translation of whose French study of Blake has been published by Chapman & Hall) has no illusions about it. In a book of four hundred large pages — certainly one of the most learned and interesting works that has ever been written about Blake — he examines, and so far as he can, explains, Blake's writings; and, although he fully appreciates the frequent grandeur of the poet's ideas and language, arrives at the mournful conclusion that his myth-making was his ruin. No one could be franker. "Many, even of the shorter

pieces," he says, "admit of various interpretations, all equally problematical. As for the long poems . . . they defy all commentators." Any word may mean anything and "his language needs a special dictionary which it would be almost impossible to compile, and the use of which would be destructive of any real poetry." And no sooner have you identified a figure or a symbol than it changes its clothes: "The Clod of Clay, for instance, symbolizes soulless matter; but it represents also man's first mother and the milk of human kindness."

It is all perfectly true. M. Berger, in spite of his pessimism about the poet, explains as far as he can. He even does much to elucidate passages like the following:

Bath . . . is the Seventh, the physician and
The poisoner; the best and worst in Heaven and Hell;
Whose Spectre first assimilated with Luvah in Heaven and Hell,
A triple octave he took, to reduce Jerusalem to twelve,
To cast Jerusalem forth upon the wilds to Poplar and Bow,
To Malden and Canterbury in the delights of cruelty:
The Shuttles of death sing in the sky to Islington and Pancrass,
Round Marybone to Tyburn's River, weaving black melancholy as a net,

And despair as meshes closely wove over the west of London,
Where mild Jerusalem sought to repose in death and be no more.
She fled to Lambeth's mild vale and hid herself beneath
The Surrey Hills where Rephaim terminates.

But the worst of it is that where Blake's narratives are made comprehensible we are not quite certain at the end whether the trouble was worth while. Urizen may be the first creation: that which first divides itself from Eternity. Los may be Time which binds and rivets Urizen. Los may also be the prophetic spirit and Enitharmon, proceeding from Los, both Space and Pity. But one feels all the time that to us who do not see these personages in vision as Blake did, the ancient classical figures Chronos, Ouranos and Terra, etc., would do just as well. We may discover what Blake meant: but it will not mean anything to us. M. Berger said that he wrote as " a mystic for mystics " and that had he written as " a man for men " he " could have stirred all his contemporaries profoundly." There is a third way: to write as a mystic for " men "; but even the most mystical of mystics can obtain little out of Blake's peculiar cosmogony. All that can be done with the Prophetic books is, as M. Berger suggests, to take them " as collections of isolated but richly suggestive fragments."

Blake, as a mystic, was concentrated upon the supernatural. He disbelieved in the evidence of the senses, which, as Mr. W. M. Rossetti rotundly phrased it, he considered "the untrue reporters about ambiguous simulacra," and in the reliability of human reason.

This is the Spectre of Man: the Holy Reasoning Power
And in its Holiness is closed the Abomination of Desolation.

He held that "the only real science is art" and his views as to the function of the artist are very clearly put in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell:*

"The Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me, and I asked them how they dared so roundly to assert that God spoke to them; and whether they did not think at the time that they would be misunderstood, and so be the cause of imposition.

"Isaiah answer'd 'I saw no God, nor heard any, in a finite organical perception; but my senses discover'd the infinite in everything, and as I was then persuaded, and remain confirm'd that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I cared not for consequences, but wrote.'

"Then I asked: 'Does a firm persuasion that a thing is so, make it so?'

"He replied: 'All Poets believe that it does, and in ages of imagination this firm persuasion re-

moved mountains; but many are not capable of a firm persuasion of anything.' "

But it is clear that " honest indignation " will fail in its effect if you clothe your words in a jargon which prevents mankind from knowing what you are indignant about unless it sits over your works for ten years in a reference library with wet towels round its head. Blake's belief that his words were inspired not merely in general purport, but verbally and literally, almost spoilt him, both as a moral propagandist, and as an artist. The wonder is that his drawings, instead of being the definite things they are, are not confused jumbles of hands, legs and eyes.

It is one of the greatest tragedies in English literary history. M. Berger fully perceives this, though he does not seem adequately to appreciate the exquisite musical quality that Blake's verse had. Blake, when he wrote the *Songs of Innocence,* was more simple and lucid than Wordsworth at his simplest. When he was making causal couplets about Cromek, Hayley, and his other bugbears, he could be equally clear. His address to the fleshly Rubens is almost Byronic:

I understood Christ was a carpenter
And not a brewer's servant, my Good Sir.

and there are many epigrams as direct as:

When Sir Joshua Reynolds died
All Nature was degraded;
The King dropp'd a tear into the Queen's ear
And all his pictures faded.

and that on the painter Cromek:

A nasty sneaking knave I knew.
Oh, Mr. Cromek, how do you do?

I do not suggest, of course, that a sack-full of such trifles would be worth the Prophetic Books. But, at any rate, one can understand them without spending the best part of one's life over them, and they show that Blake could be clear enough when he restricted the sphere of his operations. But in the Prophetic Books he had bitten off the Cosmos, and it was more than he could chew.

Had Blake's other poetic achievements not been so great it is probable that we should be more grateful for the chaotic magnificences of the Prophetic Books. Had he exercised great influence as a religious teacher and an enemy of mechanical morality, his labours would have been worth while even had he expressed himself in the baldest and most ungrammatical prose. But he ceased (save in places) to be a readable poet without becoming an audible prophet; and although a few wrinkled cognoscenti may profess to be illumined by his longer works, most people will continue to feel that the angels with whom he habitually consorted were false guides and led him off the track.

Mutual Compliments

IF any one is collecting opinions of Swinburne he should not miss that of Walt Whitman, given by Mr. Ernest Rhys in an interesting chapter of reminiscences which appears in *Today*. Mr. Rhys's article is very interesting and covers a great deal of ground. He describes his meetings with James Russell Lowell, whom he found a most agreeable person; and he has a good many memories of the lost, but not much lamented, Rhymers' Club. He says Mr. Yeats was the only member of the Club who could read well, and that Davidson " felt himself incomparably greater as man and poet than all the rest," and described himself as " a Pict among the Celts." If we leave Mr. Yeats out of consideration, I think Davidson was perfectly right. Dowson, and even Johnson, could not compare with him, and most of the others were merely ordinary small fry. But that is a side-issue; what I wandered away from was Whitman's opinion of Swinburne. Mr. Rhys saw Whitman in the later stages of his " paralytic imprisonment." He talked in " a deep monotone " and " sat still as a statue." " Only once did he appear thoroughly moved out of himself. A chance reference to Swinburne gave the provoking cue, and then his wrath was startling to behold. He turned quickly in his seat, with an angry hand lifted

from the usual arm of the chair, and in vehement, oracular voice said: 'Of all the damned simulacra I have ever known that man is the worst. He brought me to a feast — the table spread with fine dishes, but when I lifted off the covers, lo — nothing was there!'"

I do not remember having seen this before. Perhaps it was the rumour of some such utterance which led Swinburne, after writing a metrical salute to Whitman as the "good grey poet," to compose an essay on him which was in the main an attack, which suggested that he was obscene, and which contained the assertion that his language was "sometimes that of a god" (I quote, or paraphrase, from memory) "and sometimes that of a drunken apple-woman rolling in the gutter." A similar change overwent Swinburne's opinion of William Bell Scott, the Pre-Raphaelite. He dedicated a book to him as "Poet and Painter"; he then read a derogatory reference to himself in Scott's letters; and Scott at once became a dauber and a poetaster. But his best pronouncement on some one he believed to have spoken ill of him was his characterization of Emerson. He described that extremely amiable, if occasionally cloudy, sage as "a wrinkled and toothless baboon who, having been first hoisted into notoriety on the shoulders of Carlyle, now spits and splutters on a filthier platform of his own framing and fouling."

Invective

THIS habit of rounded invective is not one to be cultivated. It flourished a hundred years ago; it is almost dead now, in the limited world of literature, when in conversation we are content to call a man a windbag or a pig, and in print we laugh gently at or sweetly reason with even the most vociferous of fools and the vainest of strutters. Reviewers, at one time the most offensive of men, have now become so mealy-mouthed that we are frequently at a loss to know whether they consider a book magnificent or futile, and whether they consider its author a reptile or the torch-bearer of a newer and nobler age. This is carrying it a little too far, though there is nothing to regret in civility, provided we do not lose the courage of our opinions; but there are charms about abuse when the persons at whom it was levelled are dead and beyond being hurt. There is, I think, room for an Anthology of British Invective, in prose and verse. If well selected it would be one of the most entertaining and generally acceptable compilations that could be put together Moribund in polite letters, ingenious abuse still flourishes in the street. Half our best jokes and anecdotes still deal with what the 'bus driver said to his rival about his face, what the cab driver said to his fare about his generosity, and allied topics; and the man who can

be induced to smile at nothing else will smile at a novel form of vigorous insult. The Anthology of Invective would therefore succeed.

What would be in it? I see several sections. In the first place I would have a section of anecdotes, the folklore of invective. In the second place I would have a section of political invective. Cobbett's works are full of wonderful things about landlords, cotton-spinners and clergymen; his *Legacy for Parsons* may be commended. Milton on Salmasius would, I think, yield selections, though Milton was rather on the lofty side. Rebellion and Restoration literature is rich; *cf.* Cowley's Essay on Cromwell in which, *inter alia,* he accused the Protector of wanting to hand over St. Paul's Cathedral to the Jews. The Revolutionary era produced a very large crop; Lamb on the Prince of Wales and the *Examiner* on the same subject would not be missing; nor Byron on George III; nor Byron and Shelley on Castlereagh; nor a famous open letter of Hazlitt's. From Disraeli many admirable specimens could be obtained; Gladstone on the Turks reached a great height; there is Lord Randolph Churchill on Gladstone, Mr. Maxse on everybody, and Mr. Lloyd George on the Dukes — a subject which may be barred to him henceforth, for probably half of his friends will ultimately become dukes. Literary and general abuse would be freely provided by Swinburne, by the old Reviewers, by Christopher North; we should have Dr. Johnson on the Scotch, James

I on the fraternity of Smokers, and half the Elizabethan authors on the other half. Finally, there is the enormous body of English satirical poetry, from Skelton and Bishop Hall to Mr. Belloc and Mr. Chesterton. A great deal of it is scarcely ever read. People may dip into the satires of Donne, Marvell, Dryden, Pope and Swift, and the epigrams of Herrick, which are some of the nastiest if not the neatest in the language. But the gifted vilifier Charles Churchill is generally ignored, Oldham is barely a name to many voracious readers, and the enormous volume of Puritan and Cavalier songs (contained in collections like *Songs of the Rump* and the *State Poems*) might well be introduced by extracts to people who will never read them in the mass. What is the most drastic piece of condemnation in the language I do not know. Perhaps:

Curse the people, blast the people;
Damn the lower orders;

is more comprehensive and sweeping than most; but that is by Ebenezer Eliot and written ironically. For searching subtlety I think that Pope on Atticus holds the field. I look forward to enlightenment from some one more expert from whom, in pious hope, I await *The Thousand Best Insults, A Posy of Invective,* or *The Oxford Book of English Denunciation and Abuse.* If nobody else does it in the meantime and I survive the shocks of the modern Honours Lists, I shall probably solace my own old

age with that labour of love, thus bringing a well-spent life of action to a serene and sunny close. But I would rather somebody else did this — and every other job as well.

A Picture of Chaos

DURING the war Mr. Secker published an English version of Artzybasheff's *Sanine*. This book had a tremendous success in Germany and Russia. And, as a document, it is well worth studying here. For — leaving out of consideration its qualities as a well-written story, which are considerable — it has a treble interest. It discusses " sex-problems " with unusual honesty, if the usual inconclusiveness of books by people who have abandoned authority. It gives a vivid picture, within certain limitations, of Russian life, especially as lived by intellectuals in the despairing times after the failure of the Revolution. And it reflects the welter of thoughts and aspirations which are common to the whole contemporary Western world. Mr. Gilbert Cannan's preface suggests that M. Artzybasheff's onslaught against sex-taboos, sexual repression, and sexual hypocrisy is at once the principal purpose and the principal justification of the book. This does not appear to me to be true. The author is certainly preoccupied, not with sex, but with our ideas about sex; but these ideas are merely one company in a larger host of ideas about life as a whole, and he is equally interested in them all. He takes a group of typical young men and women who have lost the support of traditional ideas on religion,

politics, and morals, and who are crippled by their inability to discover an object in Man or the Universe, or a code by which they can live both happily and conscientiously. He shows the confusion of thought and the lamentable results of that confusion. And he presents no solution.

His own thought appears to be as distracted and uncertain as that of his characters. Presumably he is aware of that. For he cannot really have considered Sanine himself as a solution. Sanine is a sort of Superman: big and blond, though not quite a beast. He has gone through the usual ideals of the sensitive intellectual and has come out completely self-reliant and self-contained. At the beginning of the book he returns alone to the provincial town where his mother and sister live; for he likes change, and, as he says, "As long as one hasn't found people out, there is always a chance that they may prove interesting." He remains there a spectator of the lives of the family and of the local intellectuals. Now and then he intervenes in the action. He prevents — after some hesitation — his sister from committing suicide when she has been seduced and left in the lurch by a libidinous officer. Later he has a short amour with a friend's *fianceé,* who momentarily accepts his view that an hour's sensual enjoyment in the moonlight is a casual thing which may be looked back upon with pure and elevated pleasure, and not with regret, provided one can clear one's mind of absurd preconceptions. But usually he is

merely watching the antics of the imperfectly emancipated people around him. "There's an old hen for you!" he muses detachedly, as he looks at his bigoted old mother strutting across the room. Deaths and suicides, which occur in profusion, leave him merely mildly regretting people's folly. For he alone has his simple creed:

"'What is the good of living?' asked Yourii.

"'One thing I know,' replied Sanine, 'and that is that I don't want my life to be a miserable one. Thus, before all things, one must satisfy one's natural desires. . . .'

"'But his desires may be evil.'

"'Possibly.'

"'But what then?'

"'Then . . . they must just be evil,' replied Sanine blandly."

The Yourii who is the interlocutor here is the most real character in the book. Sanine himself is impossible. If he were possible, he would be loathsome — the worst of fiction is that the novelist can give a man qualities never found together — whatever M. Artzybasheff may say. But he does not even appear complete. He is rather a section of a character, the embodiment of an impulse present in everybody and of a train of thought that runs through everybody's mind — for, presumably, every man who ever thinks at all sometimes wildly conceives of himself as throwing aside all ties and restraints and striding through life, a law to himself,

like a calm, statuesque god with a bunch of forked lightnings in his clenched hand. The conception of unfettered individualism — even with Godwin's little postulate of universal benevolence worked in — won't provide either a *modus vivendi* for one individual or a panacea for social ills; but as a personification of the modern revolt against the blind acceptance of formulæ and against the fear of acting according to one's own lights, Sanine is interesting enough. Yourii, however, is a complete character, who is to be met in England as well as in Russia.

Yourii is an intellectual and an artist who has been mixed up with the Socialist movement. He is disgusted with the slowness of progress, the strength of embattled authority, the inertia of the proletariat; and he relapses into a chronic state of self-questioning. He doubts the use of anything, and he doubts the sincerity of himself. He finds self-indulgence at the root of his romanticism, and ambition at the root of his political activities. He goes about trying to get others to answer the questions he cannot answer himself. When he addresses to Ivanoff, Sanine's blunt and brutal disciple, an enquiry as to where happiness is to be sought, he is given a very good indication of his own character in reply:

" ' Well, most assuredly not in perpetual sighing and groaning, or incessant questionings such as " I sneezed just now. Was that the right thing to

do? Will it not cause harm to some one? Have I, in sneezing, fulfilled my destiny?" ' "

With domestic happiness, at all events, at his door, he questions himself until, desperate for want of "a working hypothesis," he kills himself. His death is as hesitating and feeble as his life; but he is attractive and very vivid. The minor characters — Lida, Karsavina, Semenoff, Sarudine, Captain von Dietz (the military Tolstoyan), and others — are equally convincing, as individuals and as types; and the landscape background is cleverly touched in. There is no attempt at painting more than the life of a set, or rather the spare time of a set. The labouring classes scarcely appear — save as represented by two shy individuals at a futile, smoky and beery revolutionary meeting in a studio — and we are not convinced, though we are told, that various of the persons really earn their living by working all day. But M. Artzybasheff has got the intellectual chaos on paper, and has made it pathetic; and that is a considerable thing to have done. Nevertheless, if the Western World doesn't get out of that chaos it is all up with us.

Shelley's Letters

MR. ROGER INGPEN'S edition of Shelley's Letters has now been published in two volumes of Bohn's Standard Library. It is a model edition. It first appeared, many new letters being included, in 1909; there was a second edition in 1911 with much additional matter; there is one new letter in the present edition, and there is good reason to believe that the editor has further unpublished letters in prospect. In all there are 486 letters in the Bohn edition, which runs to over a thousand pages; and there are also ample notes, a stupendous index and a very full biographical account of Shelley's correspondents. The earliest letter was written before the poet reached his eleventh birthday and the last dates from just before his death. Although there are good books on Shelley no one can get a thoroughly sound idea of what he was like without reading the letters bodily. One still finds people who, bewildered by the lofty nebulosities of *Prometheus* and *The Witch of Atlas* and *Epipsychidion,* hold Matthew Arnold's view of the "beautiful ineffectual angel"; and others who prefer to think of him as a "beautiful angel" with the "ineffectual" left out. A selection of the more ethereal poems might well generate such an opinion; but no one can read through the letters without

realizing that Shelley was ultimately a reasonable being. People forget how young he was when he committed the acts that they regard as most typical of him.

He married Harriet Westbrook and deserted her; he attempted to convert the University of Oxford to an open Atheism; he set libertarian messages adrift in bottles on the turbulent waves of the Bristol Channel; and, from a balcony in Dublin, he attempted to stimulate the depressed spirits of Irish patriots. There was something of the beautiful, bewildered ineffectual about all these things; but it is dangerous to forget that they were all over and done with before Shelley came of age. Certain characteristics in him persisted. The Shelley who at eighteen wrote "In justice to myself I must also declare that a proof of his existence, or even the divine mission of Christ, would in no manner alter one idea on the subject of morality" was the permanent, indestructible Shelley. On the other hand, the man who, ten years after, wrote "*Epipsychidion* I cannot look at. . . . It is an idealized history of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal" was a man whom experience had changed. There is a tendency to telescope Shelley's career in a manner which would have been impossible had he lived

longer, and which ignores the fact that he developed. The most matter-of-fact letters in these volumes will, perhaps, for this reason, be to many the most illuminating. "I write little now," he says at twenty-nine, to John Gisborne. "It is impossible to compose except under the strong excitement of an assurance of finding sympathy in what you write." This letter to his agents might well shock those who see in Shelley merely a Sensitive Plant:

"Gentlemen,— The parcel arrived safe, containing most of the books of the original order.

"I wish any edition of Quintus Curtius, which is not extremely dear, and which contains the supplement of Freinhemius, to be sent as early as convenient.

"Your obedient servant,
"P. B. SHELLEY."

And Mr. Ingpen even reproduces in facsimile a perfectly orderly letter from Shelley to his bankers. He did not live on air.

The letters are some of the best reading in the language. Only Byron's, Cowper's, Gray's and Horace Walpole's can compete with them. And in no collection of letters that we possess is so fine a human spirit revealed. There are faults. The early letters are, being early, immature; and they have an engagingly naïve pomposity. Some of the letters from abroad describing scenery are, though

extraordinarily good, rather over-written. In the earlier letters there is also a certain lack of balance; the transmutation of Miss Elizabeth Hitchener from a goddess into a Brown Demon (she was probably an ordinary irritating prig and ass) is amusingly rapid. But the grown Shelley is almost always not merely natural, generous, self-sacrificing, and a slave to his ideals, but also extremely sensible. It is possible to present the skeleton of his life in such a form as to make him look like an erratic fanatic; but it is not possible for any one who goes farther into it to think of him as that.

On Cleaning Books

A CORRESPONDENT writes to ask me "how Solomon Eagle cleans his books," when they are "foxed," etc. The answer is that he doesn't.

Sometimes I look at my old books, and, lo! they are very dirty. I then take one of two courses. If the book is valuable, and its condition does not make it past praying for, I send it to a firm of binders and cleaners, who eliminate stains, put invisible patches on corners, gild edges, fill up holes, and cleanse paper until it is whiter than snow. They then send me in a bill for several pounds, and for ever afterwards I have a violent aversion from the book and call it a white elephant.

This happens seldom and, until I have rescued that rich old lady from the hoofs of a cab-horse, it will happen still less frequently in the future. More usually it is the second course I adopt. I find myself regretting that a page is "foxed," ink-stained, or defaced by the tea, coffee or butter of a bygone generation which had not lived to learn the really economical use of those commodities. All my convictions about the futility of modern men who can do nothing for themselves rise in my mind;

" I will prove myself practical," I say, " and do the job myself." I then resort to Mr. Aldis's *The Printed Book,* to the *Encyclopaedia,* to Mr. Slater's *How to Collect Books,* to Hill Burton's *The Book-Hunter,* and sundry other works of reference in search of information which some of them give. I then find that paraffin-wax, benzol, acetylanilide, trinitritoluol or some such thing is wanted; and I have none in the house. I also find that time, care, patience and kindred terrifying abstractions are necessary; and I am equally lacking in them. The upshot of it is that I put the book back where it came from, consoling myself with the reflection that this mania for renovation and refurbishing is the disease of an age at once too commercial and too fastidious. Does a little " foxing " matter? Why should not a book have a few brown spots on it? Is there not a charm in the stains left by owners long ago in their graves? Are not the tea, the ink and the butter which the centuries have brought to the book an equivalent to the mellow colours and the quiet vegetation which come, with antiquity, to men's houses — a sort of compensation to the book for its inability (unless it is kept in a *very* wet place) to grow moss? Why should one want a book three hundred years old to look like one newly emerged from Henrietta Street or St. Martin's Lane? We do not go round washing tombstones with soap and water, we do not cast away oak-panelling because it is getting black; we do not fit an ancient statue with a new nose. A soiled and torn book is a small

chapter of history. Hold this charm in your hand and it provokes to dreams; the dry bones stir and take flesh, one traverses the ages and sees the life of them; every stain becomes a tear and every scrawl a signature. How, after such reflections, could one go out to the chemist to buy 2 oz. of trinitritoluol? If he were a chymist and the bottle a phial it might be a little more in keeping. I will leave the book as it is.

So I am afraid I cannot help my correspondent beyond referring him to the books and the bookbinders. They know, they know. Myself, I have never cleaned a book in my life, beyond erasing pencil-marks with india-rubber, pen-marks with the ossiform remains of the cuttlefish, and publishers' embossed stamps with a knife-handle, rubbed very hard. Only two things have I learnt and practised about the physical well-being of books; and these are, how to get rid of bookworms and how to clean bindings.

Bookworms, though undoubtedly traditional things and the accompaniment of venerable age, I cannot commend and do not wish to preserve. These tiny bradawls go clean through leather, much more paper; and if they are allowed to run loose they may end by destroying the legibility of the text, which, after all, is an integral part of the book. Being once harassed by them, I systematically read them up. There were large pictures of them, by no

means alluring; their mandibles, legs and nervous systems were accurately described; their names (like those of so many insects, Latin ones) were written out at length. But I found that no one could give me the only information I wanted. I hadn't the least curiosity about how they lived; I wanted to know how they died. But no one could tell me. All the experts could do was say, doubtfully, that such and such a chemical had been tried with some success; and that they were believed to languish and lose much of their appetite if dosed with such and such another. I gave them all the chemicals that the heart of bug could desire. The more chemicals they ate, the more paper they ate: it was as if they made sandwiches with them and found the sandwiches unprecedentedly appetizing. In the end I met a man who said that bookworms liked damp, and that they consequently throve on a clay soil. I therefore moved house and they disappeared.

The cleaning of bindings I found equally simple, though I do not profess to get more than amateur results. There are limits to one's veneration for dirt; and a quarter of an inch of ancient filth on a back, originally of white vellum, is a little more than the coarsest of us can comfortably stand. All kinds of things were recommended me, but in the end I found that a little paraffin worked very well on ordinary calf — on the labels as well if one did not apply so freely or rub so hard as to get the colour off. And for vellum backs soap and milk;

though at the present moment, with a world-shortage about, I had better express my long held conviction that there really cannot be any mystic virtue which milk possesses and water lacks. Take a black or dark grey vellum binding. Take a rag. Take some soap. Take a saucer of the liquid. Moisten the rag with the liquid, rub it on the soap, and then apply to cover, and a little exercise will show you — what you can scarcely have guessed before — what the cover was originally like. The time taken to do the job properly I should assess at a full day for ten large volumes. Unless you are a person of leisure you will end, as one usually does when one has mown grass, mended a lock, put up a fowl-house or done anything else for oneself, by wondering whether it wouldn't have paid better to employ somebody in the trade. And that, finally, is the best advice I can give to my correspondent about all such things.

The Essay in America

THE Oxford University Press has done an interesting thing in issuing an *Oxford Book of American Essays.* It is not implied that, on the whole, there is much to distinguish American from English essays, or that the best essays in the book might not equally well be included in an anthology of English essays. As the editor, Professor Brander Matthews, remarks, "Just as Alexandrian literature is Greek, so American literature is English." What is more, American essay-writers have, on the whole, kept perhaps a closer contact with the English tradition of style, language, and form than any other class of American writers. The earlier essayists — Irving, for example, and Dana — might quite well have been Englishmen, as far as their essays betray them. As one goes on a peculiarly American turn of speech or humour comes in occasionally; but our contemporary John Burroughs, with his *Idyl of the Honey-Bee,* might be own brother to Richard Jefferies; and Henry Cabot Lodge himself, in the very process of protesting against *Colonialism in the United States,* demands a native Kultur in the phrases and periods of, say, the *Times* Literary Supplement.

But it was worth publishing the book here, firstly because many of the lesser, but nevertheless quite interesting, American essayists here included would be crowded out of a more general collection, and secondly as a demonstration of the strength of American literature in this particular department. Even in a more general way we rather tend, as a rule, to under-estimate the American literature of the nineteenth century because of our automatic habit of mentally comparing it with the rich contemporaneous "outputs" (I apologize for this word) of England and France. As Professor Matthews remarks, "although American literature has not been adorned by so great a galaxy of brilliant names as illumined British literature in the nineteenth century, it has had the good fortune to possess more authors of cosmopolitan fame than can be found in the German literature of the past hundred years, in the Italian, or in the Spanish." And the essayists of the U.S.A. have done abnormally well.

The selection is very comprehensive. Franklin, Irving, Emerson, Hawthorne, Poe, O. W. Holmes, Thoreau, Lowell, Walt Whitman, are represented, as well as Henry James, W. D. Howells, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Hamilton Wright Mabie, Samuel McChord Crothers, and Theodore Roosevelt. Mr. Roosevelt's contribution is not very inspired, perhaps: an earnest plea for Whitman and even Futurism based on a study of Dante.

" Dante's masterpiece is one of the supreme works of art that the ages have witnessed; but he would have been the last to wish that it should be treated only as a work of art, or worshipped only for art's sake, without reference to the dread lessons it teaches mankind." A good many of the essays, English enough in expression, are local in reference: the book shows the general, and not inexcusable, American traits of self-consciousness and self-comparison with other peoples. Sense on the subjects of *Americanism in Literature* is to be found in Higginson's essay: he was anxious that Americans should be American, but he pointed out that "originality is simply a fresh pair of eyes," and that the deliberate constrained effort to be American was as useless as the effort to be French or German. Essays of this serious kind are frequent in the book, and depend rather on their matter than on their manner for their effect. But one need not cavil at their inclusion, for it is a large book and its contents range from Franklin's pathetic *Dialogue on the Gout* and Irving's Lambishly meditative reflections on mutability at Westminster to Poe's highly technical account of how he wrote *The Raven.* No purist would accept this as an essay, though it is of normal essay length. But it is an extraordinarily fascinating and subtle piece of work and one of the few accounts we have of the genesis of a work of art in the artist's brain. Whether it is entirely accurate one does not know; he may have laid it on a little brutally to shock the sentimental when he explained

how he started with an idea of making an impression of Beauty; how melancholy seemed the most useful tone to adopt; how a refrain seemed the quickest way of getting the atmosphere; how "Never more" was selected as the best refrain; how a non-reasoning speaker of the refrain was decided on to avoid monotony; how his first notion as to the speaker required was not a raven, but a parrot; and how the climax was written first. If he *had* selected a parrot, the poem would probably have had a different complexion, though his power was so great that he might even have made a green-and-red Polly an emblem and oracle of tragic doom.

Turning over casually, I came upon Wendell Holmes' *Bread and the Newspaper,* in great part an analysis of national and individual feelings in time of war: the nervous restlessness, the inability to read the normal things, and so on. "Another most eminent scholar," he says, "told us in all simplicity that he had fallen into such a state that he would read the same telegraphic dispatches over and over again in different papers, as if they were new, until he felt as if he were an idiot." Time has not modified the human mind here; and I noticed in myself a quickened interest in all the references in these essays to England, Germany, or war. New life and force is given to Lowell's remark,

"Pachydermatous Deutschland, covered with trophies from every field of letters, still winces

under that question which Père Bouhours put two centuries ago, *Si un Allemande peut etre bel-esprit?*"

Lowell did not, however, reserve his investigations for the Germans. A little farther on one comes to a story of an Englishman:

"During the Civil War an English gentleman of highest description was kind enough to call upon me, mainly, as it seemed, to inform me how entirely he sympathized with the Confederates, and how sure he felt that we would never subdue them — 'they were the *gentlemen* of the country, you know.'"

One whole essay is given up to us. It is Irving's *John Bull.* It is rather sentimental, and his acceptance of the conventional Bull as the typical Englishman would be even less justified now than it was then. But he appends to his description of old manor-houses, old dependants, old wine, portliness, quick anger, ancestral elms, etc., a certain amount of criticism. He had his views on our chronic desire (as he sees it) to volunteer our services to settle our neighbour's affairs:

"He cannot hear of a quarrel between the most distant of his neighbours, but he begins incontinently to fumble with the head of his cudgel, and consider whether his interest or honour does not require that he should meddle in the broil. Indeed he has ex-

tended his relations of pride and policy so completely over the whole country, that no event can take place without infringing some of his finely spun rights and dignities. Couched in his little domain, with these filaments stretching forth in every direction, he is like some choleric bottle-bellied old spider, who has woven his web over a whole chamber, so that a fly cannot buzz, nor a breeze blow, without startling his repose, and causing him to sally forth wrathfully from his den.

My country, 'tis of thee! But 'tis affectionately spoken.

The Prices of Restoration Books

A YEAR or two ago, when discussing book-auction prices, I suggested that sixteenth and early seventeenth century books had now been so thoroughly explored, and had reached such high prices, that collectors would be driven on to the Restoration and Queen Anne and Georgian periods. You have to pay many pounds for a good copy of any minor Elizabethan versifier, your Herrick may cost you £130, and the market has been so thoroughly ransacked for these early books that the excitement of the chase has almost disappeared from their collection. I also pointed out that the work of scholarship on authors from Spenser and Marlowe to Suckling and Vaughan had been pretty thoroughly done, although no doubt many puzzles remain unsolved and there is still ample room for the operations of the textual critic. Scholars, therefore, as well as collectors, must inevitably be pushed onwards to another period — a period, no doubt, poor in the highest classes of literary production, but still interesting and offering an enormous field for research. Mr. P. J. Dobell has apparently come to similar conclusions: his recent catalogue of Poetical and Dramatic Literature produced between

the years 1660 and 1700 is the first attempt I have seen to cover the field. "I do not think," he says, "any work exists from which a general view of the activities of the poets and playrights of the last forty years of the seventeenth century can be obtained." His catalogue is an endeavour to provide such a work. It has, obviously, one great limitation. Like that old, but still useful, book *Anglo-Poetica,* it is a bookseller's catalogue. That is, nothing can be included unless Mr. Dobell has a copy for sale. Even so almost every author of any importance appears, and the twelve hundred "titles" include a large number of rare and obscure works. There are a few conspicuous omissions; as, for instance, that mysterious and passionate Ephelia about whom Mr. Gosse wrote an essay long ago; and Philip Ayres, who may be regarded as the very last of the Elizabethans and published a volume called *Lyric Poems* in 1687. But Ephelia is a rare author, as, having vainly looked for a copy of her works for years, I have reason to know. If a complete list of missing editions were to be compiled it would be many times longer than Mr. Dobell's. Nevertheless, his catalogue will be of immense use as a supplement to the, in this department, very inadequate Lowndes.

There is no room here for a detailed examination of the catalogue. Many of the books here priced may still, by the lucky, be bought at considerably lower prices than Mr. Dobell's, simply owing to the

sluggishness hitherto of both dealers and buyers. But considering that he is establishing a market, and has had the very great labour of making and annotating this catalogue, his prices as a whole seem to me extremely reasonable, and far lower than they can possibly be a few years hence. One of the "items" he stars is a series of papers relative to Dryden's translation of Virgil, mostly in the handwriting of his publisher, Jacob Tonson. "These papers are of the highest importance, and necessary in making any calculations as to the amount of money Dryden earned by his translation"; and Mr. Dobell asks £40 for them. I confess that to me they are not highly important, but any one who is tempted to think that such things do not matter should reflect on the price that would be asked and given for similar papers relating to the transactions between Shakespeare, or Mr. W. H., or some person unknown, and Mr. T. Thorpe. Most of the books are priced in the neighbourhood of a pound or two; some are cheaper and a few are already expensive. Lord Orrery's posthumous *Poems on Most of the Festivals of the Church* ("From the peculiar type used it has been suggested that this volume was printed and set up at Cork") is going for £5. A second edition of Brome's *Songs and Other Poems* (1664) is priced at six guineas; and the same amount is asked for James Carkesse's *Lucida Intervalla* (written from Bedlam, 1679), of which Mr. Wheatley could not find a perfect copy. Four guineas is asked for a slightly defective first edition

of Congreve's *The Old Batchelour;* six guineas for a first edition of *Annus Mirabilis;* and seven or eight guineas for other works by Dryden, of whom Mr. Dobell's collection is remarkably comprehensive. A second edition of Farquhar's *The Recruiting Officer* (recently performed by the Stage Society) is priced at six guineas; and eight guineas is the price of a first edition of Flatman's *Poems.* Flatman, unknown to the general reader, has a rather strange vogue in the auction room; his most amusing effort is a description of his distaste for an active part in warfare. The most notable book offered, however, is a (supposedly unique) copy of Marvell's *Miscellaneous Poems,* 1681, first recorded eleven years ago. " All other known copies of the book collate irregularly, some of the sheets not having their full numbers of leaves, and until the discovery of this copy no explanation of the irregularity was forthcoming, but it is now evident that suppressions were made whilst the book was passing through the press. The missing leaves of the ordinary copies, as they appear here, contain the three poems relating to Oliver Cromwell, including the famous ' Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland.' It had always been supposed that this ode was not printed until 1776, when it appeared in the edition edited by Captain Thompson." Thompson destroyed his manuscript, and the present volume is the only external authority for the authenticity of the poem. Mr. Dobell asks £275 for it, and it ought to go to the British Museum.

There is a great field open for editors. The manuscripts of the period have not been thoroughly read; and many charming things probably remain to be discovered and published. The numerous miscellanies have never been properly examined with an eye to ascription of their contents — though here and there (as in the case of Mrs. Behn, who was recently admirably edited by Mr. Montagu Summers) an editor has ransacked them with his eye on a single author. Most even of the principal writers have not been properly edited: even of Dryden no one has collated the early editions. The various volumes and editions of the (often grossly misnamed) "State Poems" would alone give a conscientious editor years of work. The song books (of which the not-yet-adequately-studied *Pills to Purge Melancholy* is the prince, and the type) contain masses of songs, some new, some traditional, some jingles, some beautiful poetry, of which the texts require purification or the authorship remains to be determined. As one turns Mr. Dobell's pages one notices the names of authors unknown to any previous compiler; but one notices still more frequently names to which scholarship has not yet done justice. I turn, for instance, to William Walsh. I see that Mr. Dobell offers, for 5s. each, two copies of Walsh's *Funeral Elegy* upon the death of Queen Mary (1695); and, for 30s., four handwritten transcripts of *The Golden Age Retriev'd, or the 4th Eclogue of Virgil translated.* The manuscripts give, apparently, a better text than

that printed. Neither of these works is of stupendous interest. But Walsh wrote two of the most delightful things of his time, and even when he is writing most nearly to the general current manner he retains his individuality. The only attempts at a collected edition of him with which I am acquainted are a very bad eighteenth century one and an early nineteenth century one directly cribbed from it. His " output " was small, though research may still add a few pieces to those which are known. But he is well worth editing; and, even if he weren't, they will simply *have* to edit him when they have done with his predecessors and major contemporaries. Here are some of the essential materials going in Mr. Dobell's shop for a few shillings. I think I shall have to edit him myself.

The Humours of Hymnology

THERE was once an amusing article on the humours of hymnology in the *New Witness*. It was written by Mr. T. M. Pope and he had collected some strange freaks. Dr. Watts, it appears, began one of his children's hymns with "'Tis dangerous to provoke a God"; and observed in another that there was no sight on earth so fair as death:

Not all the gay pageants that breathe
Can with a dead body compare.

But possibly the most finished of his examples was that celebrating the virtues of four saints in one stanza:

Ever constant in our aims,
Like St. Philip and St. James:
Always striving to be good,
Like St. Simon and St. Jude?

As an essay in compressed hagiology this could not easily be equalled.

It is an entertaining subject. Clergymen will often talk about it; there is an indefinable flavour of harmless, indirect blasphemy about it. But there

are places where you can find appalling hymns not in single spies but in battalions. Revivalist hymn-books and those of eccentric sects are always worth inspection. One of the worst on record is that used by the followers of Joanna Southcott. I have a copy dated 1804. The title-page, headed "The Song of Moses and the Lamb," describes it as "An Hymn Book for the Sealed Number or, the Millennium-Church, collected from the Writings of Joanna Southcott, the Woman Clothed with the Sun." Underneath is a note, unaffectedly prefaced with "N.B.," saying that "Her writings are the leaves of the Tree of Life, for the healing of the Nations"; and a further statement, backed by the authority of Revelations, that "no man could learn that Song, but the 144,000, who were redeemed from the Earth." Personally I should not greatly care to learn it, even though the editors candidly admit that they have made "a few necessary alterations, as the metres did require it." They corrected cautiously, however, as they held that "every line in this Hymn-Book is true, and not the least inferior to the Bible, particularly to the Psalms of David; yea far superior, and exceeds them."

Joanna's style may be exemplified by the assurance that men will never attain to glory until they recognize her divine mission and penitently

With the woman do agree
To take the fruit held out by she.

To this use of pronoun she was addicted; another instance is

The blades that I have call'd be wheat,
Are those that judge the calling great,
That they from Satan shall be free,
And Pharaoh was a type of he.

Occasionally she is, like most mystics, obscure:

To warn their friend of ev'ry truth they know,
'Tis plain I did for them, the truth is so
And so the bread is on the waters cast,
And like thy uncle now the Jews will burst.

And almost invariably she has to labour hard to express herself. A good example is:

Then as a sparrow on the house,
Thou say'st thou stand'st alone,
And with thee to assisting oft,
The Lord well know'th thou'st none.

It is not an improvement on the original image.

This comparison of David (or another) with the sparrow is a favourite stumbling-block. It supplies one of the best passages in the extraordinary metrical version of the Psalms which, allowed in the eighteenth century by the Authority of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, is still, I believe, appointed to be sung in Scottish Congregations and Families. When originally issued the version was

announced to be "more plain, smooth, and agreeable to the Text than any heretofore." The sparrow passage runs:

I like an owl in desart am,
That nightly there doth moan.
I watch, and like a sparrow am
On the house-top alone.

which may be agreeable to the text but is scarcely so to the reader. The normal course of this great hymnal might be shown by its transformation of By the Waters of Babylon, which proceeds evenly to a perfect close with:

Yea, happy shall he be,
Thy tender little ones
Who shall lay hold upon, and them
Shall dash against the stones.

This is what the translator had the impudence to call smooth.

A Dreadful Story

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD in her reminiscences tells one of the world's most horrible stories. In the eighteen-thirties a Spaniard (who later on was a friend of hers) was hunting for Spanish MSS for Sir Thomas Phillipps. He knew at that time nothing about English books. In a palace at Valladolid he found a friend

"in the old library of the old house, engaged in a work of destruction. On the floor of the long room was a large *brasero,* in which the new librarian was burning up a quantity of what he described as useless and miscellaneous books. . . . There was a pile of old books whose turn had not yet come lying on the floor. Gayangos picked one up. It was a volume containing the plays of Mr. William Shakespeare, and published in 1623. In other words, it was a copy of the First Folio, and, as he declared to me, in excellent preservation. . . . The book had belonged to Count Gondomar; . . . its margins were covered with notes in a seventeeth century hand."

When he reached England he told Sir Thomas and J. O. Halliwell (-Phillipps). They were both

wildly excited. Gondomar was Ambassador in London in Shakespeare's day; the notes were probably his; anything might be in them. Gondomar had possibly set down all the memories of the plays he had seen acted, and perhaps all sorts of information about Shakespeare. Gayangos was hurried back to Spain. But when he got to Valladolid the book was gone.

One really well-annotated copy might save us a lot of trouble. It was improbable, however, that annotations by a Spaniard would do one of the most important things — *i.e.*, settle which of the doubtful plays and passages Shakespeare wrote. In a memorial addressed by the Irish Nationalists to President Wilson it was alleged that even the greatest of Englishmen was so congenitally unfair towards other nations that in *Henry VI.* he wrote in a brutal and blackguardedly way about Joan of Arc. The political relevance of this I will not discuss, nor its tact. But its imbecility as a literary judgment I do feel competent to mention. In the first place, the very objectionableness of the sentiments would demonstrate to any unprejudiced person who knows his Shakespeare that Shakespeare could not possibly have written this part of the play. However little we know about Shakespeare, we know he was neither cruel nor a bigot nor a cad. He *could* no more have written the whole of this play than George Meredith could have done so. That, however, may be considered a matter of opinion, and cer-

tainly we are not accustomed to settle questions of authorship by testing moral atmospheres. But these ignorant manifestants, in their heat, did not even attempt to discover whether there was the slightest ground for supposing that Shakespeare wrote the play. Had they remembered that even people with a just grievance have a duty of verifying their charges, however irrelevant, they would have found that for indisputable textual reasons it was long ago decided that Shakespeare had nothing to do with Joan of Arc. The universality of that judgment is notorious; but one may as well give chapter and verse. I may quote Sir Sidney Lee:

"At the most generous computation no more than 300 out of the 2,600 lines of the First Part (of *Henry VI.*) bear the impress of Shakespeare's style. . . . The lifeless beat of the verse and the crudity of the language conclusively deprive Shakespeare of all responsibility for the brutal scenes travesting the story of Joan of Arc which the author of the first part of *Henry VI.* somewhat slavishly drew from Holinshed."

According to Mr. Fleay the play "is evidently written by several hands," and Shakespeare merely added a little after it had been given to the manager. He thought that Marlowe, Peele, Lodge and Greene botched it up together. Coleridge, in his *Notes* of 1818, told us to read first a few passages even from Shakespeare's earliest dramas, and then a

speech from Act I., Sc. 1, of *Henry VI.*, Part I. " Read," he says, in words which I commend to Mr. John Dillon,

" in the same way this speech, with especial attention to the metre; and if you do not feel the impossibility of the latter having been written by Shakespeare, all I dare to suggest is, that you may have ears — for so has another animal — but an ear you cannot have, *me judice.*"

Dowden, of whom, since he was a Professor, in Dublin, Mr. Dillon and his colleagues may have heard, when arranging Shakespeare's plays, boldly put *Henry VI.* in the " Pre-Shakesperian Group."

Hazlitt remarks, by the way, that Joan was even more scurvily treated in Voltaire's *La Pucelle.* Voltaire was not an Englishman, or an Orangeman, or an oppressor of small nationalities.

Dr. Donne's Tomb

I HAD made a reference to "theological booksellers who cater for clergymen and regard Donne primarily not as John Donne, but as the Dean of St. Paul's." Two days afterwards I met a soldier in the streets who talked about this. He said that he thought Dr. Inge had points of resemblance to Donne and was an original and remarkable man. I agreed with this. He then said that he had never seen Donne's tomb and effigy; I said that I knew it only from reproductions. We thought we would go there. We began to walk. It began to rain. We stopped a taxi. I said: "St. Paul's Cathedral, please," and the driver gaped. My companion then said: "Don't you know where it is?" and the driver's mouth closed up and expanded horizontally. So off we went, quite a happy party.

Had I the space, the inclinations and the talents of the realistic novelist, I should go on with this leisurely detail. I should indicate the colour of the cabman's nose (though perhaps you can guess that), the amount of paper on the cathedral steps, the dispositions of the pigeons, the bleachings and blackenings on pillars and walls, the dress, attitudes and banal remarks of the people who emerged as we went in, the sounds made by various footsteps, the

light streaming through various windows, and the probable occupations and domestic infelicities of the persons who, scattered about the rows of chairs, were awaiting the opening of the four o'clock service. But this is impossible. Compression is essential, and all these things must be left to the imagination. For me, I must hurry on with my story, if story it be.

We went up the south aisle and drew blank; there were some terrible monuments which should certainly join the great majority in Westminster Abbey. We then tried the north aisle. We wondered why Alfred Stevens had put his powerful equestrian statue of the Duke of Wellington so high that no one could see it. We remarked that there was one sentence on the tomb of Gordon (that about his remaining at Khartoum) which, like many lapidary inscriptions, did not tell the whole truth. We thought that the tomb of Lord Leighton, though not a masterpiece, illustrated the enormous advance made by modern academic work as against eighteenth century academic work. We then reached the end of the aisle and found a group of vergers. They were white-haired and wrinkled; their black gowns and long silver crooks inspired a respect which verged on fear. The conversation that followed showed that theological booksellers and their customers are not the only people who think of Donne as primarily a divine:

"'Could you tell us where the tomb of John Donne is?'

Dr. Donne's Tomb

"'Who?'
"'John Donne; Dean Donne.'
"'Oh; *Dean* Donne!'"

They lifted a little red rope from its support, showed us across and let us into the aisle at the south of the choir. There, in a dark place flat against the wall, it stood: the only monument in Old St. Paul's, I think, which escaped the great Fire of London. He stands, with his hands folded and the shroud covering him from head to foot; his intense, sardonic face, with its eyes closed, looks out from his hood and is the only thing of him that shows. It is a queer, stark, frozen thing: there is no beauty about it, but a force that makes everything else in the Cathedral seem dead. The sculptor was not a great artist; but he must have been under the spell of Donne when he made it. I think it is in Isaak Walton's *Life* that one reads the story of Donne's preparations for that effigy; how he rose from his sick-bed, had braziers lit all about his great room at the Deanery, and stood upon an urn in that attitude of death whilst a painter sketched him. On that painting the statue in St. Paul's was presumably based. But not entirely. The folds of the drapery are the folds into which a recumbent man's would fall. It appears, therefore, that the sculptor used a recumbent model for his drapery; he may have intended his effigy to lie flat along a tomb, as effigies usually do; for all I know (though here I may have some antiquary correcting me) the effigy did lie flat at first, and was

never erect until Wren had built his new Cathedral. At all events there it is; cold in a quiet corner; and both by its coldness and its strength very out of keeping with its surroundings. "Out of keeping" is a weak phrase. In that great, complacent, Italianate building, which looks so much smaller than it is, a building designed with skill but no inspiration, lacking all mystery, all fervour, all sense of the fierceness of life, the terror and the importance of death, the insistence of a surrounding eternity, the power or the love or the beauty of God, this small, crinkled statue is like a word of challenge or rebuke, and of lordly derision. No place but a Gothic building would properly hold it; and it is seemly that that should be so with a statue of Dean Donne. He was, in some ways, a child of the Renaissance: he had its learning, its curiosity, and, in youth, its swagger and its recklessness. But still more he had affinity with the scholars of the Middle Ages in whom he was profoundly read; and that affinity is never more strongly realized than when one is reading his Sermons with their passionate, tortuous extravagant logic and their towering caverns of gloom shot with unearthly fire. Donne's brain was the strangest and most elaborate Gothic building ever seen on earth.

Russian Wit

I HAVE just been reading a little book, *Russian Proverbs and their English Equivalents,* by Louis Segal, published by Kegan Paul. The editor quotes Bacon's remark: "The genius, wit, and spirit of a nation are discovered by its proverbs." I append a few selected ones in order that my readers may have an opportunity of defining the genius, wit, and spirit of the Russians:

"Curled cows have short horns.

"Men meet whilst hills stand still.

"Kings have long arms and many eyes and ears.

"Beware of the fore part of an ox, the hind part of a mule, and all sides of a monk.

"Hawks do not pick out hawks' eyes.

"The ocean is but knee-deep to a drunken man.

"An unfortunate man would be drowned in a tea-cup.

"A bad arrangement is preferable to the best law-suit.

"God is too high and the Tsar is too far away.

"The world is large enough to contain all the people."

These are good. But I think the best proverb I ever struck was an African negro one. It says: "No man can lick his own back." How true that is!

The Goncourt Journal in English

POLITICAL events affect the manner in which one reads books. I have been reading the late Julius West's English courageous abridgment of the *Journal des Goncourt,* published by Nelson's at the absurdly low price of a shilling. It is the most diverting of modern literary memoirs. In Jules de Goncourt's diary from 1851 to his death in 1870, and in Edmond's continuation from that year until the 'nineties, one has a long panorama of social and political life in Paris during the second half of the nineteenth century. Almost every prominent Frenchman of the time is sketched in the book; every movement is reflected in it; there are endless witty stories and phrases; and there is also the autobiography of two extremely interesting men. Yet, looking at it just now, one finds one's eyes glued to every casual statement the diarists made or recorded about national characteristics or about war. Such statements are very numerous in Mr. West's selection; and the part of the journal most fully represented is that which covers the Franco-German War, and especially the siege of Paris, which Edmond described with the eagerness of a journalist and the detachment of an artist. That detachment was never

more marked than during the siege: detachment, that is, from the life of action, and the feelings of those around him — not from the physiological influence of external events. There are many authors at this moment who will find their own state anticipated in this, for example:

"October 15th, 1870. I live on myself. I can only exchange my views for some as little varied as my own; I only read news of a wretched war; I can only find in the newspapers the eternal repetition of these defeats they call 'reconnaissances on the offensive'; I am driven from the Boulevards by the forced economy of gas; I can no longer enjoy a nocturnal life in this city where everybody goes to bed early. I can read nothing. I cannot dwell in the pure realm of thought because of the lowering of that thought by the poverty of its food; I lack the new, and I vegetate in this brutal and monstrous thing — war. The Parisian in Paris is overcome by a boredom that is like the boredom of a provincial town."

We hear a great deal of the discussion inside the town. We find him dining at Brébant's with Berthelot, Saint-Victor, Renan, and others on September 6th, 1870. Defeat has been overwhelming; resistance is hopeless:

"We curse that Prussian savagery which Genséric is starting again.

"On this Renan says: 'The Germans have few

joys in life, and the greatest one they know they put into hating; into the thought and the perpetration of vengeance.' "

Two months later Bismarck is compared with Attila. The ferocity and boorishness of Germans, indeed, is a recurring theme. Here is an entry of April 17th, 1877:

" We were talking about the implacability of the Germans; of the impossibility of speaking to the humanity of these men, so reserved and so inaccessible. Cherbuliez tells us that we are wrong, that the Teutons have a quarter of an hour when they may make concessions; it is the quarter of an hour which slips past between dessert after dinner and the tenth whiff of a cigar."

The last entry of the sort is dated 1890:

" This young German Emperor, this neurotic mystic, this enthusiast for the religious and warlike operas of Wagner, this man, who, in his dreams, wears the white armour of Parsifal, with his sleepless nights, his sickly activity, his feverish brain, seems to be a monarch who will be very troublesome in the future."

A few years ago one would have skimmed all these passages; now they stick out of the page.

Not that de Goncourt was particularly appreciа-

tive of any nation — even his own, which at times appeared to him as a noisy rabble that made the lives of civilized men intolerable. But whereas the Germans are regarded as abominable, the others appear to be rather comic. As light upon his conception of Englishmen we get this (1874):

"I am in a compartment of Englishmen, and I saw seven of them simultaneously wind up their watches. It was done so mechanically, so automatically, that it nearly frightened me, and I fled into another compartment."

But "when these Englishmen set out to be original, they do so in a much more striking manner than other Europeans." And early in Jules's diary we find this country held up by two distinguished men as the home of liberty and diffused culture as against bourgeois, philistine, police-ridden France. Taine observes that French literary influence is declining, and that only English authors are read. He

"talks about the absence of an intellectual movement in provincial France, when compared with all the learned societies in English counties and in German towns. He speaks about this overgrown Paris of ours, which absorbs everything, and of the future of France, which, under existing conditions, must end up by a congestion of the brain. Then he goes on to praise England, and is taken up by Sainte-Beuve, who confides to him his disgust at being a French-

man. 'I know what one is told: a Parisian isn't a Frenchman, he is a Parisian; but one is French all the same, which means one is nothing at all . . . a country where there are policemen everywhere . . . I wish I were English; an Englishman is at any rate somebody.' "

This will read oddly to those English people who think that every man who can write French is a genius, and that Paris is, and always has been, the centre of the world.

The *Journal* is so rich in detail that six pages of extracts would scarcely give an idea of it to a reader unfamiliar with it. We grow intimate, through the de Goncourts, with men like Daudet and Zola, whom we follow from the penury in which (an aspirant to epic poetry) he lived as a youth, luxuriating in a grey pessimism and pawning his shirt to buy food, until the days when, still discontented, he was the "largest seller" in France. And we get glimpses of hundreds of others, from Baudelaire, with his "studied elegance" and his "voice that cuts like steel" to Sarah Bernhardt, Anatole France, and President Poincaré. Théophile Gautier, during the siege of Paris, has to wear braces for the first time in his life, owing to the attrition of his abdomen, which had previously "done the needful" in the way of support. Maupassant, going mad, has no book but the *Almanach de Gotha* on his table. Wilde, a young poet, turns up and astonishes the incredulous French by

telling the American chestnut about " Do not shoot the conductor, he is doing his best "; and the self-contained Flaubert, after visiting a house with a small baby in it, says: " A little thing like that in the house is the only thing in the world that matters! " Jumbled together with the daily records are reflections on everything in heaven and earth: on Mexico, where, if you want to collect an army, you get a brass band to play and lassoo those who collect to hear it; on American dentistry, which may some day, during a financial crisis, lead to a wholesale excavation of cemeteries for the sake of countless interred gold stoppings; on British bantams, " little birds who are embarrassed by their leg-feathers and run about looking as troubled as people whose trousers are coming down." Through it all runs the thread of personal feeling: the struggle of the brothers for success, Edmond's grief for his brother, his literary jealousies, his worries about the censorship, his agonies on first nights, and, at the close, a taste of public recognition — a banquet or two, and an old age full of tender and whimsical memories of boyhood. Edmond's style is not so concise as Jule's, had not that bite and exactitude; but he wrote with unfailing vividness and charm. The difference of styles comes out in the translation. It is an excellent, free version; but one may just wish that Mr. West had not spoken of a pavement as a " side-walk." We shall be getting " trolley-car " and " hand-grip " acclimatized next.

Poland and Our Poets

THE restoration of the integrity and independence of Poland should stir some British dust. A century ago Poland was one of the favourite subjects of our poets, and no alien before or since has been more belauded by our writers than Kosciusko, whose name and fame are now very shadowy for most people. Keats addressed to Kosciusko a sonnet coupling the Pole with King Alfred. It is a very bad sonnet, and one of the most distressing examples I know of sense being made to follow rhyme. Byron, taking *Don Juan* through Poland, observed that —

Kosciusko's name
Might scatter fire through ice like Hecla's flame.

And there are other references in the same traditional vein in *The Age of Bronze:*

Ye who dwell
Where Kosciusko dwelt, remembering yet
The unpaid amount of Catherine's bloody debt!
Poland! o'er which the avenging angel pass'd
But left thee as he found thee, still a waste,
Forgetting all thy still enduring claim,
Thy lotted people and extinguish'd name,

Thy sigh for freedom, thy long-flowing tear,
That sound that crashes in the tyrant's ear —
Kosciusko! . . .

To the young Tennyson Poland's blood was " sacred blood," crying:

Lord, how long shall these things be,
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?

But the most fervent and frequent singer of Poland's woes was Thomas Campbell, who was continually writing metrical leading articles on our foreign policy. His *Lines on Poland* (1831) are typical:

. . . . Poles! with what indignation I endure
The half-pitying servile mouths that call you poor.
Poor! is it England mocks you with her grief,
That hates, but dares not chide, the Imperial Thief?
France, with her soul beneath a Bourbon's thrall?
And Germany that has no soul at all?
States, quailing at the giant overgrown,
Whom dauntless Poland grapples with alone?
No, ye are rich in fame even whilst ye bleed.
We cannot aid you — we *are poor indeed. . . .*

Parts of this poem are amongst the finest things Campbell wrote. That cannot be said of anything in his drastic *The Power of Russia,* in which he argued that the conquest of Poland " the last land of heroes," would be followed up:

Russia that on his throne of adamant
Consults what nation's breast shall be next gored,
He on Polonia's Golgotha will plant
His standard fresh; and horde succeeding horde,
On patriot tombstones he will whet the sword
For more stupendous slaughters of the free,
Then Europe's realms, when their best blood is poured,
Shall miss thee, Poland! as they bend the knee;
All — all in grief, but none in glory, likening thee.

In Campbell's view the "Russ" was made of nature's basest clay, and quite beyond redemption. His address to Sir Francis Burdett, who in 1832 strongly expressed the below-gangway view on foreign policy, anticipates much that has been written by opponents of the Russian Entente in the last few years. Trafalgar Square has never outdone the vigour of this:

Burdett, demand why Britons send abroad
Soft greetings to the infanticidal Czar,
The Bear on Poland's babes that wages war.
Once, we are told, a mother's shriek o'erawed
A lion, and he dropped her lifted child:

But Nicholas, whom neither God nor law,
Nor Poland's shrieking mothers overawe,
Outholds to us his friendship's gory clutch;
Shrink, Britain! shrink, my King and country, from the touch!

He prays to Heaven for England's King, he says;
And dares he to the God of Mercy kneel,
Besmeared with massacres from head to heel?
No; Moloch is his god — to him he prays;
And if his weird-like prayers had power to bring
An influence, their power would be to curse.
His hate is hateful, but his love is worse —
A serpent's slaver deadlier than its sting!
Oh, feeble statesmen, ignominious times,
That lick the tyrant's feet, and smile upon his crimes!

Swinburne's sonnet on Poland is better known.

. . . thy sons long dead
Against a foe less foul than this made head,
Poland, in years that sound and shine afar;
Ere the east beheld in thy bright sword-blade's stead
The rotten corpse-light of the Russian star
That lights toward hell his bond-slaves and their Czar.

But this was later than the others, and does not ring quite so convincingly.

Misgovernment, crime, infringement of liberty could be found elsewhere and nearer home than in Poland. But the circumstances of Polish subjection were such as to strike the romantic mind. The partition was so nakedly unscrupulous, the principal

conquerors were a people so remote, so numerous, so wild, and at that time so little known; and the reckless courage of the Polish risings were so splendid. Poland's sufferings became the measure of her past virtues, and poets who were aflame at her subjection exaggerated most wildly the glories of her history and the quality of her liberties. In reality Poland, in spite of its occasional feats, was a standing example of discord and ill-government. It was run, as has been said, by a democracy of nobles " which persecuted heretics with the fervour of a mediæval king, and ill-treated its serfs after the approved methods of Reginald Front de Bœuf." They were not Campbell's " majestic men " by any means. The Aggression from which their country suffered acted, as Wilde said of literary dialect, as " a means of recreating a past that never existed." Modern bards are more sophisticated. We have lost our political illusions. We may believe in Persian or Finnish freedom, but we do not for that reason regard Finns as the finest people on earth, or pretend that Persia in the past has displayed the united virtues of Athens and Sparta and the vices of neither.

Literature and the Advertiser

ONE of the worst advertisements I have ever seen is before me. It is headed with a well-known portrait of Keats; chosen possibly because it is the one in which the poet is holding his head, a common practice with those who are out of sorts. Then follows the advertisement:

A GREAT POET—
AND A GREAT TONIC

PINK RHOMBOIDS

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

"What a bracing effect there is in such lines! (The pity of it, that the writer died at 25.) They send the blood along the veins with an added glow. Supplement this with Pink Rhomboids, the Reliable Tonic. They enrich the blood and increase the number of your red corpuscles — the Army Service Corps of the body.

"Supplement this"! But I will not paint the lily, gild refined gold, or add an odour to the violet. I will merely say that had Mr. Leacock or Messrs. Lucas and Graves composed this advertisement, he

or they would have been told this was one more example of his or their extravagant, though doubtless amusing, humour. The truth of the matter is, of course, that truth is even more horrible than fiction, which is saying a good deal.

I do not, of course, suggest that advertisers, who desire to make their advertisements attractive, should be debarred from "supplementing" their own efforts at composition with extracts from great writers. For the relevant extract no apology is needed: if a tobacco firm advertises its wares with a remark from Charles Lamb that tobacco is the young man's inspiration and the old man's consolation, or one from Burton or Sir W. Raleigh to the effect that this "weede did much solace and gratifie mee whenas I did finde myselfe full of an atrabilious and melancholique humour," nobody can object. Nor can one debar didactic sentences, quotations which are current moralizing coin, from being used here as everywhere else. The first great inventor of the literary advertisement was the late Mr. Eno, or some anonymous expert in his employ, who used to muster to the support of his excellent and (as I think) palatable medicine all the sages of all the ages: Socrates, Epicurus, Zeno, M. Aurelius, Confucius, Goethe and Emerson. If Emerson or Zeno said, "Virtue is the best path to a long life," or "Early to bed and early to rise," Mr. Eno could certainly not be condemned for giving the truth a wider currency. One would not object to some of Keats being thus employed, as incidental decoration: "A thing

of beauty is a joy for ever " is the sort of line that can be used anywhere and has nothing in it that will spoil. But not long, beautiful passages, not emotional passages, not personal things, wantonly linked to things with which they have no relation, and profaned and vulgarized by the contact. If this kind of thing is to be admitted by papers — and it was in a highly respectable Church organ that I saw the Rhomboid effort — there is nothing to protect us from: " Tennyson was a great man. You can tell him by his bald head, his profile, his beard, and his collars. He said: 'I would that my heart could utter the thoughts that arise in me.' What a loss to literature! Imagine what 'thoughts' would have been had his heart been able to 'utter' them. Yet he had nobody but himself to blame for this disastrous impediment. If he had only taken Jimbo's Pellicules his heart would have been equal to any calls he might have cared to make upon it." Or: " 'Not poppy nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the world.' Thus Shakespeare, who certainly at times felt run down and in need of bucking up. But why did he stop the catalogue there? There are syrups which are not opiate and are not 'drowsy'; why did he say nothing of Blinkers', the most invigorating syrup in the world?" The uses of somebody's whisky to Adam Cast Forth and the application of somebody's soap to Lady Macbeth's hands offer other possibilities. Are we going to get worse and worse and worse? Speaking dispassionately, I rather think that we are.

Cobbett as Housekeeper

MR. DOUGLAS PEPLER, of the Hampshire House Workshops, Hammersmith, has done a laudably eccentric thing in publishing a reprint of Cobbett's *Cottage Economy*. For Cobbett is not very widely read in our day, and original editions of most of his hundred or so volumes can be picked up for a shilling or two in the second-hand bookshops. Yet he was a great man, and a complete man. His style, at its best, is noble in its rough eloquence and in its complete efficiency for the various uses to which it was put; he preached the normal life with amazing consistency and force; and, unlike most persons who are strong on principles, he was a good hand at practical detail. The present work is a cookery book and small-holder's guide. It supplies full, plain, technical instructions for brewing beer, making bread, salting mutton and beef, keeping cows, pigs, bees, geese, ducks, turkeys, fowls, pigeons, rabbits and goats, making illuminants, mustard, clothes, straw-plait and (oddly) ice-houses. But the passion which led him to produce this compendium for the agricultural poor bursts through occasionally in the hearty dogmatism which is seen, more at large, in such works as his *Legacy for Parsons*. He was so pleasantly blunt. When he attacks superfluous "book-learning," he says that he objects to it particularly

" in schools over which the parents have no control, and where nothing is taught but the rudiments of servility, pauperism and slavery."

When giving his instructions about brewing he goes off into a defence of beer as against " liver-burning and palsy-producing spirits " on the one hand, and " tea-messes " on the other. Far more sustenance is to be got out of beer than from the " corrosive, gnawing and poisonous " tea (which, in his day, used to be stewed for an hour before drinking), and he illustrates this truth with characteristic concreteness:

" It is impossible for any one to deny the truth of this statement. Put it to the test with a lean hog; give him the fifteen bushels of malt, and he will repay you in ten score of bacon or thereabouts. But give him the 730 tea-messes, or rather begin to give them to him, and give him nothing else, and he is dead with hunger, and bequeaths you his skeleton, at the end of about seven days."

His treatise on keeping pigs is interrupted by a typical diatribe. A paragraph begins with " this hog is altogether a capital thing." In a few lines we reach a denunciation of the poor who have " fallen into the taste of *niceness* in food and *finery in dress;* quarter of a bellyful and rags are the consequence "; and then this is traced to " the system of managing the affairs of the nation " which has made all " *flashy* and *false*":

"Pomposity, bombast, hyperbole, redundancy, and obscurity, both in speaking and in writing; mock delicacy in manners, mock liberality, mock humanity, and mock religion. Pitt's false money, Peel's flimsy dresses, Wilberforce's potato diet, Castlereagh's and Mackintosh's oratory, Walter Scott's poems, Walter's and Stoddart's paragraphs, with all the bad taste and baseness and hypocrisy which have spread over this country; all have arisen, grown, branched out, bloomed and borne together; and we are now beginning to taste of their fruit."

It is slightly hyperbolic itself, perhaps; but Cobbett could always give reasons for anything he said, even if they were not always sound reasons.

The reprint has an introduction by Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who, like his brother and Mr. Hilaire Belloc, has done his best to get Cobbett read by this generation both for his matter and for his manner. Mr. Chesterton, in discriminating between Cobbett and Ruskin, makes one rather unjustifiable statement. He suggests (though he admits the charge would be "exaggerative") that "an unamiable critic might say that Ruskin knew everything about the building of a church except what it is built for." I am more often in agreement with Mr. Chesterton than with Ruskin; but I cannot help remembering that one of the most eloquent passages Ruskin ever wrote points at length the contrast between an English Cathedral city, where the edifice

still harmonizes with and dominates the feeling of the people, and St. Mark's at Venice, the religious purpose of which is never remembered by the crowd who chatter and hawk their wares around it.

Autography

SOMEBODY, noticing that I was discussing the prices of books and autographs, writes to tell me that when at school he induced the late Dr. W. G. Grace to sign a postcard portrait. What, he asks, is the market-value of this? I don't know. I should say, subject to correction, that it would not be worth more than a few shillings. Thousands of small boys must have written to Grace for autographs, and many no doubt got them. This same excessive popularity will, I imagine, militate against the value in posterity's eyes of many of the signatures of the contemporary eminent. The autographs of Miss Edna May, Miss M. Studholme, and Miss Z. Dare, if they acceded to a tenth of the requests made of them, must be enormously plentiful.

This autograph business is very queer. Letters or inscriptions of any interest signed by any sort of celebrities always have some market value. It is rather strange, therefore, that one does not hear of ruthlessly businesslike persons — I mean private people, not recognized dealers — making systematic collections of MSS. by their own contemporaries. Occasionally one does encounter in the sale-room a letter written by a living man to a living man, and one often sees presentation copies of books which a

living author has given to a living friend. There are, therefore, it seems, persons who are not too timid to sell people's autograph communications to themselves with the writer's full knowledge. The sort of speculator I have in mind would not need to do anything so bold as that. All he would do would be to lay in autographs as wine-merchants lay in wines, and let them mature until the writers are dead. There are numbers of persons living from whom a man of any astuteness could elicit letters, whose MSS. after they are dead will be as valuable as those of the "Great Victorians" are now; and the more extensive the speculator's net the more certain he will be of getting a return. One can conceive a large cellar of modern autographs of which some would mature every year thus bringing in to its owner a quite regular income. A man with a large acquaintance amongst authors and a mind of the "real-politik" type could do the thing at the cost of a very few hours' labour a week.

A Forgotten Caroline

IN America today literary research is being conducted on a scale unparalleled in the world's history. In countless universities countless professors and aspirants to the doctorate are writing treatises or editing old books. A good deal of the work produced is amusingly pedantic and purposeless. People will write long theses on *Ten Soliloquies of Marlowe Contrasted and Compared* or *The Use of the Infinitive in Pope's Homer.* But often these books put readers of poetry deeply in the debt of American scholarship. Among such is Miss Eloise Robinson's edition of Beaumont, which is published under the auspices of the Department of English Literature at Wellesley College.

Joseph Beaumont, who was born in 1616 and died in 1699, was a member of that group of poets of which Crashaw, Vaughan, and Traherne are more celebrated members. A High Church clergyman, he was expelled from his fellowship at Cambridge under the Commonwealth, returned to the University after the Restoration, and ended his life as Master of Peterhouse. His long poem *Psyche* was reprinted by Grosart, who also reprinted the selection from his minor poems first issued in1749. But the

majority of his minor poems, which exist in an MS. owned by Professor G. H. Palmer, of Harvard, have never before been printed. Miss Robinson has now made the whole of them accessible; and she has added bibliographical and critical introductions which leave nothing to be desired.

It is not to be supposed that the discovery of these poems is anything like as important as was that of Traherne's. A great deal of the interest of Beaumont's poetry lies in the sidelight it throws on the general literary tendencies of the day and on the work of his greater contemporaries in particular. His subject-matter was theirs; his opinions were theirs; his phraseology was largely theirs; but comparison of his work with that of Crashaw and Vaughan shows how differently men of differing powers will work with the same materials. He will address St. Teresa, but not with Crashaw's passion; he will muse upon eternity, but not with Vaughan's vision; and the stock classical allusions to the Phœnix (say) or to Arabia, which greater poets could use a hundred times, yet always with freshness, are with him stock allusions and nothing more. All the faults they had Beaumont had in double measure. Most of his poems did not spring from the imagination; his method rather was to seize any event or story that happened to catch his eye and batter his brains for a spiritual analogy for it. His imagery was sometimes most ludicrously laboured. "Whilst I," he writes on his birthday (only his 32nd),

behinde Me cast my annual Ey,
What do I but my Sodome *spy!*
O lamentable sight
Which justly might
Not fix me in a pile of Salt,
But all my guilty Essence melt
Into a flood of Pœnitence, whose Tide
Might drown that which is gone,
And let me safely on
Its back unto the shore of this Year *ride.*

The Leviathan, which wrenched from Vaughan his phrase "the comely spacious whale," led Beaumont to an equally unfortunate effort:

Thy Prophet Thou didst summon from
His living Tombe,
Where twice-devoured He,
Lay drowned both in the Whale, and Sea.

His image of the Lord of Light passing through "His chrystall Mothers wombe" leaving her "intirely whole" exactly anticipates an image that Gibbon invented to ridicule the Virgin Birth, and when he set for "a Base and 2 Trebles" a lilt beginning:

Fond Syllogismes, in vaine
You arme your Propositions Three
Against Religious Trinitie.

And proceeding to discuss the "Angles in the Eter-

nall Trigon" he was certainly writing for an age rather than for all time. A great deal of his verse is not even quaint like this; but much of it is interesting and some of the shorter lyrics are really beautiful. *The Relapse, The Evening Hymn, The Morning Hymn, The Alarm, Games, The Duel, The Gentle Check, Suspirium,* would all be worth including in a seventeenth-century anthology. So would the noble *Pretence* (now first published), with its exhortation to himself "to walk the hardy and heroik Way" and "By his deer Blood to trace The gallant Footsteps of thy *Lord*." It is impossible to quote this in full here, or the exquisite *Easter Dialogue* either; but a few lines from the latter will show how beautiful it is. The Magdalen is weeping at the tomb. The Saviour appears and she thinks He is a gardener:

JESUS: *Woman, to what loss do thine Eyes*
Such full drink offerings sacrifice?

MAGDALENE: *Sweet Gardner, if thy Hand it were*
Which did transplant Him; Tell me where
Thou sett'dst that pretious Root on whome
Grow all my Hopes; and I will from
That Soile remove him to a Bed
With Balme and Myrrh and Spices spred,
Where by mine Eyes two Fountains He
For evermore shall waterd be.

JESUS: *Mary.*

MAGDALENE: *O Master!*

ANGEL (*1st and 2nd*): *With what sweet*
Fury she flies at his deer Feet,
To weep and kiss out what She by
Her Toung could never signify!

It was rarely that Beaumont wrote lines as good as these; "sweet fury" could have been bettered by none of his contemporaries. He was not built to become a great poet. Neither poetic nor religious ardours burnt fiercely with him. Poetry he did not consider his serious business, and, as a rule, his self-communings took the form rather of a slightly complacent self-examination than of real spiritual strife. He was thoroughly religious, but seldom passionately so; he revered the saints, but wrote of them rather as items in a calendar than as suffering and aspiring human beings; he became one of the fattest pluralists of his day, and he lived to a very advanced age in full possession of his faculties and his emoluments.

The Diarist in Our Midst

MR. GEORGE RUSSELL, who has died unexpectedly young (he was 66), was one of the best of the Victorian diarists. He kept elaborate diaries, and whenever he wanted to write a new book of reminiscences of the illustrious, all he had to do was to meander through them and pluck a sufficiency of flowers by the way. He was not a great wit, a great observer, or a very vivid and eloquent writer. But he was sincere, had a good eye and an immense acquaintance, and was amiable, lively and readable. His diaries exist: the time may come when they will be published; they may, for all I know, equal Greville, though I doubt it. At all events, we cannot finally judge him by what he has written for his contemporaries, with whom a man has all sorts of reservations, and to whose ephemeral interests (if he have an eye on them) he is liable to cater in selecting his material. It is possible that he has left something written deliberately for later generations; but I doubt it, and even if he has it will probably be interesting but not a masterpiece. For his attention largely centred on passing controversies and second-rate people temporarily conspicuous.

The diary takes all sorts of forms; a man may publish in his lifetime a biography which is in essence a diary meant for posterity. Boswell, when he

wrote Johnson's life, did so with the deliberate object of displaying his hero to succeeding ages, and he told succeeding ages precisely what they wanted to know. Horace Walpole composed his letters to his friends certainly with the object of amusing his friends, but with the equally clear object of being printed and read posthumously. It was a sense of his duty of satisfying the curiosity of his successors that made Crabb Robinson record all the breakfasts he took with poets, painters and lawyers; and it was certainly with an eye on posterity and not on his contemporaries (though his scheme of shorthand was such that posterity might not have bothered to pierce the veil of his manuscript) that Pepys made a note of all that happened within his purview, from the doings of King Charles to those of Deb, the maid. We are confronted almost daily with memoirs written by the living for the living: "Things I Remember," "Things I Can Tell," "Forty Years in the Diplomatic Circle," and so on. But the interesting figure is not the superficial diarist who accumulates materials for a gossipy volume of reminiscences, but the sagacious, the skilful, the dedicated diarist who makes his notes a lifelong work, cares little for the opinion of his contemporaries, and means to be read "when all the breathers of this world are dead." Where is he? He is somewhere. Possibly at your elbow now.

Somewhere today the twentieth century diarist is amongst us. Nobody knows he is doing it; or at

least nobody guesses, and few try to guess, what he is putting down. He is recording his impressions of the war, of the peace negotiations, of the mind of the rich and the demonstrations of the poor. Just as Pepys wrote of London streets growing grassy during the Plague, and Walpole described London illuminated for victory and London surging with discontented weavers, so he is carefully composing descriptions of this, that and the other, of Armistice night, of the opening of Parliament, of the railway strike, of President Wilson's drive to the City. He may himself have been a special constable or a temporary civil servant or an organizer of Red Cross Sales, in which event the personal narrative will blend with the public as Pepys's does. He may be an official like Charles Greville, with good opportunities of getting behind the scenes: a Cabinet Minister's secretary, perhaps. He may be a person of leisure who knows everybody. But somewhere he is walking about. Very likely he is quite an ordinary-looking man, with a bowler hat, a neat black overcoat, a small moustache, and hair growing grey at the temples: familiar to the members of various clubs, welcomed in many houses as an inoffensive guest, but to the general public entirely unknown. His picture, I fancy, once appeared in the *Daily Mirror*, standing in the background behind several duchesses, on a charitable occasion. Yet it will be to his writings, more than to all our contemporary mass of journalism and descriptive fiction, more than to the huge documented tomes of the professional historians,

that posterity — which means a number of people like you and me who do not happen to be yet born — will go for the most intimate and convincing accounts of the public scene of today.

And in his book — or, if you like, in their books — there will be a good deal more than this. The diarist will make familiar to posterity, will even bring into the very foreground of our spectacle of 1919, persons who to contemporary eyes are ciphers, non-existent. As we know General Seymour and Topham Beauclerk, Bennet Langton, Boswell and Sir W. Pen, so posterity will see, walking most conspicuously about our streets, little Mr. Jones, of whom nobody but the diarist is aware. Posterity will read, and imagine to have been on the lips of all our generation, the witticisms of that young man, who is unknown save at a few dinner-tables in various capitals. The diarist is noting these, following his game with scrutinizing eyes and a concealed pencil. He is most carefully putting down all those epigrams and satirical verses about the Great which go from lip to lip, but which no one is ever traitor enough to put into print. He is smilingly rectifying the reputations of politicians and men of affairs: setting irretrievably down the things they say about each other, about their opponents, about the measures they are supposed to support, about their constituents. He lunches and dines with men of letters; he knows their weaknesses and their hostilities. And here and there he knows a man of genius, rela-

tively obscure to us, but to posterity as interesting as Keats or Shelley is to ourselves; he is cherishing the observation of such men on their art, recording their facial expressions, receiving their confessions, their admissions, and their contentions: giving himself, in fact, harmless amusement which posterity will regard as an inestimable service. And, incidentally, possibly with full consciousness, and (if he be a person now regarded as an amiable nonentity) with a pleasant self-satisfaction at thus building himself a monument over-topping those of the "famous in their day," he is guaranteeing his own fame. . . . I hope he exists.

But I don't know who he is. Sometimes I suspect one man and sometimes another. There is a little man I occasionally play cards with who looks a likely candidate; there is a superannuated politician whom I sometimes fancy; there is a man of letters, long eminent, of whom I feel that he may posthumously crown a career already great with a diary immeasurably finer than anything that he has done. It does not do to linger on this subject too long: or one begins choosing one's words, and even one's company, lest one should go down to posterity pilloried in some foolish sentence, a prize ass. But I cannot help occasionally returning to it. For, important though we may be in our time, urgent though our businesses may be, in the latter end we shall be food for worms — and for diarists.

A Parody in Slang

I HAVE excavated from a drawer a yellow cutting I made from some American newspaper before the war. The journal had offered a prize for a translation of Heine's *Lorelei,* and one of the competitors submitted this: —

I sure wish some guy'd put me jerry
To what put the jinx on my grin.
Some stuff that's as ancient as Perry
Is buzzin' around in my bean.

It's time for the glims, and it's chilly
There ain't no wild waves on the Rhine;
And, bo, take a slant at that hill. He
'S lit up like a booze-parlour sign.

A swell-lookin' Jane there is sittin'
And flashin' a bushel of rocks;
Dolled up in her glad rags, loose fittin'
She chases the comb thro' her locks.

And while with that 14 K. harrow
She gives her alfalfa the drag,
She spiels like a white-necktie sparrow
A classy young raggety-rag.

A Parody in Slang

The guy in his one-lunger dingey
Goes nuts on her musical game,
And bumps on a rock with a bing. He
Just can't get his lamps off that dame.

I'll bet you a bone to a marble
He's going to land in the drink;
And it's Lorelei's fancy old warble
That put him for keeps on the blink.

I am not competent to supply glossary and annotations to this, but any one who compares it with the original will find that it is a very close version indeed.

Dialect in Literature

RECENTLY a writer in the *Times* reviewed a new book by Mr. J. S. Fletcher, the Yorkshire author, who has written many readable novels. The point about the new book (it is in verse, but that does not greatly signify) is that it is written in Yorkshire dialect. This appeared greatly to cheer the *Times* reviewer. "There are," he said, "unmistakable signs, from Shetland to Cornwall, that dialect poetry is now appreciated. Mr. Burgess, the Shetlander, has now a sheaf of slim volumes to his name, as has also Mr. Bernard Gilbert, the Lincolnshire poet; and the recent publication of Mr. Bernard Moore's *A Cornish Chorus* is another indication that the idiom and tonality of modern English dialects are appreciated by others as well as by the upland folk in whose speech they are written. Most modern dialect poets unlock their word-hoard in lyrical form. It is hard to say why they should choose this form of expression. . . . *Leet Livvy* is a fine achievement in modern dialect literature, and whilst it adds fresh lustre to the author's fame, it illuminates the dialect and proves it to be a fitting garment for narrative poetry. If it prove to be the begetter of a further line of longer poems written in modern English dialects, it will do more than we confidently hope." I read this; I have read some of the

books referred to, though not the " sheaf of slim volumes " of the Shetlander. I had before me a quotation from Mr. Fletcher, beginning:

For I haate her waur nor iver
but shoo pulls, shoo pulls, all t' saame.

And I began wondering whether I shared that " confident hope." I do not think I do.

I daresay that I start with a prejudice that many people probably share, arising from the fact that I instinctively shirk dialect painfully transferred into print. Barnes, of Dorsetshire (who wanted to call an omnibus a folk-wain), was a man of genius, but I am sure he would be far more widely read had he written in English instead of in broad Dorset. Burns's dialect is, though in many of his best things he does not carry it uncomfortably far, an obstacle to readers south of the border. Tennyson's experiments in Lincolnshire look so terrifying that the reader turns the pages until he comes again to the language which, after all, Tennyson himself spoke. Directly I see " haäte " with a diæresis I visualize the author, himself in most cases a person who pronounces hate as I do, and certainly one who has been trained to write it as I do, laboriously repeating the local pronunciation to himself and trying with his dots and his broadened vowels to represent it phonetically. My eye is hurt; the spelling gets in the way of the meaning (which, we should not forget, is

of prime importance) and I tire. The man who writes in dialect, that is to say who does the thing thoroughly, is deliberately limiting his audience. And, in most cases, when he *has* narrowed it, he does not reach the people who speak the pure dialect that he is recording, but only educated people who have a taste for the curious, or a theory about the value of dialect. Both in verse and prose I think that both author and reader alike are spared much unnecessary trouble, and a far wider audience may be reached, if local or personal differences in speech are indicated only by occasional words and turns of phrase. A tinge is enough. It is maddening to read a novel in which the fact that one of the characters speaks Cockney leads to every page being sprinkled with distorted vowels, apostrophes and misplaced " h's."

The question is ably and broadly discussed in a chapter of Mr. G. Gregory Smith's new book, *Scottish Literature* (Macmillan). Mr. Gregory Smith appears to share the views I have expressed above; he also makes the point, which must appeal strongly to one who (like myself) has just promenaded Scotland, that dialect literature, if the theorists carry out their theories, means an immense amount of subdivision. It is no good composing something you think is Scotch and writing in it, if you wish to be accurate. The Scotch of Glasgow, the Scotch of Roxburghshire, the Scotch of Skye and the Scotch of Aberdeen are not one thing; there is even a difference (I am credibly told) between the pronuncia-

tion of various towns on the Clyde but a few miles from each other, though this difference is, I confess, not perceptible to the naked ear of an Englishman. Mr. Gregory Smith makes sport with the enthusiasts who jumble all Scots dialects together " and translate the whole into ' fonetik ' for ' scientific ' use on Teutonic gramophones." He defends " the delicate colouring of standard English with northern tints," and I think that what holds good for Scotland holds good also for Devonshire. We have standardized our spelling throughout these islands — it was not so standardized in the times of James I. and Sir David Lyndsay. Write down a word like " worm " and that actual spelling represents different things to different people. To an educated Englishman the " r " scarcely exists in the sound of it; to the Scot the word represents " wurrum "; to various English yokels other varieties of pronunciation are automatically suggested. If we are familiar with the dialect of a district or a kingdom, the " tinge " will suffice to give us the local colour throughout, as it does in the works of many modern Irish writers who do not distort the spelling of every English word they use.

If we are not thus familiar I doubt if any amount of laboured orthography will convey the real thing to us, and few of us will take the trouble to search for it. After all, though the author of *Piers Plowman* was right in using the dialect of his time and place and could not help so doing, it cannot be dis-

puted that more people would read him and enjoy him if he had contrived to write English as we know it. I would be a pity were our local pronunciations to fade; and I do not think they will. But let us have a uniform spelling, and do not let us start encouraging the gifted young in Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Rutland to turn their backs on the spelling they have learnt and begin writing their epics and romances in something that looks to us like Polish. For if so they will hamper themselves by the unnatural constraint and prevent most of us from reading them. The one advantage of a general use of dialect would be that it would finally demonstrate to our obtuse Simplified Spellers how impossible it is to get a standard phonetic spelling of English when we have no standard pronunciation, and when, in many cases, a provincial pronunciation is near the present spelling of a word whilst the current educated pronunciation of it is not.

Greene's Groatsworth

MR. BLACKWELL of Oxford has for some years been producing cheap modern books very tastefully. Their contents have not invariably commended themselves to all of us, but even where the verse has been immature the cover-papers have always been ingenious and sometimes delightful and the type of paper far above the standard usually reached by those of such cheap books. This enterprising publisher, who is all the more interesting in that he conducts his operations from what Oxonians may pardon me for describing as a provincial town, is now bringing all his arts to bear on the production of small reprints which, either for appearance or textual character, cannot easily be paralleled. The first three were all translations; the fourth is Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*. This small book is here printed in black and red on excellent paper, and bound as though it were really an amusing book and not a work of reference for scholars. And it is an amusing book.

Robert Greene the playwright was born in 1560, went to Cambridge, married in 1585–6, deserted his wife, who had borne him one child, went to the devil, wrote profusely, and died at the age of thirty-two in

miserable poverty. The *Groatsworth of Wit* was published posthumously in 1592. The most famous thing in it is the passage which is supposed, with every probability, to refer to William Shakespeare. Of him Greene, and his companions, Nashe and Lodge, who were scholars and not actors, and may not have liked being eclipsed even by a greater than they, were very likely at once contemptuous and envious. The reference occurs in the course of a general denunciation of mummers, " those puppets (I mean) that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colours ":

" Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart crow beautiful with our feathers, that with his *tyger's head, wrapt in a player's hide,* supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute *Johannes Factotum,* is in his own conceit the only *Shake-scene* in a country. Oh, that I might intreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions."

Macaulay, employing upon Greene's coloured prose the analytical method that he favoured when people mixed their metaphors, might have made considerable play with these sentences. They are highly zoological; they almost supply a menagerie in themselves. One of the apes is an upstart crow with a tyger's head; the compost reminds one of the

worst conjectures of ancient Egyptian theology. Scholars have supposed that the "tyger's head" should really be a tyger's heart; a man is certainly more likely to have a hide over his heart than over his head. The allusion is to a line in *Henry VI.*

This passage comes in the middle of an appendix which he introduces with "Albeit weakness will scarce suffer me to write, yet to my fellow scholars about this city will I direct these few ensuing lines." It is to be hoped that some at least of them profited by their friend's experience. There is little evidence that Nashe did, but we may at least be allowed to hope, for Greene's sake, that his exhortations did something for Lodge, who lived to a ripe and unproductive old age. There follows the fable of the ant and the grasshopper, who, like poor Greene himself, "died comfortless without remedy"; and then, "beseeching them that shall bury my body, to publish this last farewell, written with my wretched hand," he proceeds to humble himself before his wife and entreat her forgiveness, a most moving confession ending, "Thy repentant husband for his disloyalty, Robert Greene."

These be the appendices, historically very interesting; the main pamphlet (it is no more) relates the story of one Roberto and his brother, who are ruined by extravagance and vice. It is a thin tale, but the moral, however obviously, is sincerely preached, and

the prose is muscular, vivid and melodious. The introduction, effective enough, is in a modified euphuistic style. It opens (for Greene, unlike modern novelists, wrote for the male reader):

"Gentlemen,— The swan sings melodiously before death, that in all his lifetime useth but a jarring sound. Greene, though able enough to write, yet deeplyer searched with sickness than ever heretofore, sends you his swan-like song, for that he fears he shall never again carol to you wonted love-lays, never again discover to you youth's pleasures. However yet sickness, riot, incontinence, have at once shown their extremity, yet, if I recover, you shall all see more fresh springs than ever sprang from me, directing you how to live, yet not dissuading you from love. This is the last I have writ; and, I fear me, the last I shall write."

The antithetical mode of writing is deserted directly the narrative is begun.

What unmistakable charm, what an atmosphere about the very first sentence: —

"In an island bound with the ocean, there was sometime a City situated, made rich by merchandize, and populous by long space; the name is not mentioned in the antiquary, or else worn out by Time's antiquity, what it was it greatly skills not; but therein thus it happened."

What happened was that there was an old miser with two sons.

" Wise he was, for he bare office in his parish, and sat as formally in his fox-furred gown as if he had been a very upright dealing burgess: he was religious too; never without a book at his belt, and a bolt in his mouth, ready to shoot through his sinful neighbour."

Languishing in Death, the old man addresses his two sons, one a stupid materialist, the other (Roberto, to wit) a scholar who contemns wealth. The old man says, with the quaintest turn of speech, that he has been unable to entreat, cozen or bribe Death:

" In brief, I think he hath with this fool my eldest son been brought up in the University, and therefore accounts that in riches is no virtue."

Thus he proceeds until he complains of an inward pang:

" ' I, father,' said Roberto, ' it is the worm of conscience that urges you at the last hour to remember your life, that eternal life may follow your repentance.' ' Out fool! ' said this miserable father, ' I feel it now, it was only a stitch.' "

The old man dies and the two brothers wander off to a light o' love's where the younger is ensnared —

to lose all his substance in two years, ending no richer than his improvident brother who had but a groat. The story, although short, wanders and digresses. The lady tells, for instance, a fable of no particular value about a Fox — who, to secure his private ends, " made a friday face, counterfeiting sorrow." " Friday," spelt with a small " f " and used as an adjective, looks odd and delightful to our eyes. The adjectival usage is not entirely analogous to that in the phrase " Sunday clothes," which is to be taken literally. The book is full of little flavoured phrases like this, and you find them everywhere in Greene's writings. In them, as in minor Elizabethan prose and plays generally, you get a closer and fresher view of the life of the time than in greater works and the lyrics which are all that most people read.

James Whitcomb Riley

IN bed, with a high temperature, and all the repellent attributes of forehead, eyes, mouth, and back which are described in patent medicine advertisements, I had not lived, during the week, a strenuous intellectual life. At rare intervals, and for two or three minutes at a time, my leaden eyelids had lifted and I had taken in a few lines of *Buried Alive* and *A Rebours,* which, for some, or no, reason, found themselves side by side on my table. Being utterly incapable of thought, I was just wondering from which of these two books I should quote a few passages which, with some perfunctory praise or condemnation, would fill a yawning page, when one came into my bedroom and told me that the *Times* had an obituary notice of James Whitcomb Riley. The old man, it seems, had joined the great majority a few days before myself; and I had my selections from Riley brought up, as also a volume of the *Encyclopædia,* to refresh my memory. For the only line of Riley's that I could recall in my condition was one which I have quoted before: "The beetle booms adown the glooms and bumps along the dusk," and which could scarcely be considered representative.

Riley, like Joaquin Miller and other American bards of the type, probably had many amiable qual-

ities. I should think he would have made a very kind, though a too voluble, grandfather. But he was a very bad writer. And his badness was "of various kinds." In the volume I open the first poem is called *A Life Lesson.* It begins: —

There! little girl, don't cry!
They have broken your doll, I know;
And your tea-set blue,
And your play-house, too,
Are things of the long ago;
But childish troubles will soon pass by —
There! little girl, don't cry!

In the next verse it is her slate that is broken; in the last (need I say it?), her heart. Perhaps what the *Encyclopædia* writer calls his "naïve humour and tenderness" may be held to be illustrated here. But naïveté may be carried too far. A few pages later on there is a lyric called *A Song,* which, though it might elicit storms of applause in a West-end music-hall, could hardly be held, by even the most tolerant of critics, to justify a claim to immortal bays. The text is: —

There is ever a song somewhere, my dear;
There is ever a something sings alway.

And the chorus is certainly as good a model for that kind of journalist who is, like myself, paid by space, as anything I've ever seen: —

There is a song somewhere, my dear,
Be the skies above or dark or fair,
There is ever a song that our hearts may hear,
There is ever a song somewhere, my dear,
There is ever a song somewhere!

On the whole I think I prefer Riley's dialect poems, even though they do occasionally present an English reader with such problems as the word "lightning-bug," which I very timidly hazard may be Hoosier for glowworm, though without confidence enough to bet on it. The more conventional poems are free from this kind of difficulty, though I am rather puzzled by a being with: —

a plume of red,
That spurted about in the breeze and bled
In the bloom of the every lad.

As a rule the difficulty with these poems does not lie in particular words. Where it does lie may be indicated if I quote the last stanza of an endeavour to expand and presumably to improve the nursery rhyme of *Curly Locks:*

And feast upon strawberries, sugar and cream
From a service of silver, with jewels agleam.
At thy feet will I bide, at thy beck will I rise,
And twinkle my soul in the light of thine eyes!

Well, really! Goodness only knows what sort of

picture the poet meant to " conjure up " by that last line. Is " twinkle " here a verb transitive or intransitive?

Take this again: the first two stanzas of *The Funny Little Fellow:* —

'Twas a Funny little Fellow
Of the very purest type,
For he had a heart as mellow
As an apple over-ripe;
And the brightest little twinkle
When a funny thing occurred,
And the lightest little tinkle
Of a laugh you ever heard!

His smile was like the glitter
Of the sun in tropic lands
And his talk a sweeter twitter
Than the swallow understands;
Hear him sing — and tell a story —
Snap a joke — ignite a pun,
'Twas a capture — rapture — glory,
And explosion — all in one!

I cannot enter into details, or it might be possible to inquire whether it is really complimentary to a person to compare his smile to a tropical sun, or his heart to an *over-ripe* apple. Whether the poet intended the additional dubious compliment of comparing his friend's singing to an explosion can only

be decided by an authoritative elucidation of his rather hectic punctuation. But the stanzas illustrate very well what was really wrong with Riley; it was not that he was too naïve, but that he wasn't naïve enough. He was sophisticated without being intelligent. He was always self-conscious, whether he was attempting to write as he conceived that other poets had written, or whether he was setting out to interpret the feelings of the strong and simple folk of the prairie.

I find that the *Encyclopædia* appears to regard as one of Riley's principal feats an imitation of Poe that he published in the Anderson *Democrat.* It had the initials " E. A. P." under it; it was alleged by the editor to have been found " on the fly-leaf of an old Latin-English dictionary " then owned by " an uneducated and illiterate man " in Kokomo, who had received it from his grandfather, in whose tavern, near Richmond, Va., it had been left by " a young man who showed plainly the marks of dissipation "; and it deceived many distinguished critics. I have not seen this work, though I can quite well imagine what it must be like. But I cannot conceive that anything of Riley's could really make it worth the *Times'* while to speculate, as it did, whether Riley would live or not. Its conclusion, that he has as much chance of living as many others, was at least cautious, but on the whole I incline to think that the *Times* writer, like myself, had had to go to the *Encyclopædia* for his facts, and that, unlike myself,

he had never read any Riley. For the sober truth is that the " Hoosier poet " was neither a better nor a worse writer than Mrs. Wheeler Wilcox, and that both owe their popularity to the same qualities. Mr. G. R. Sims is at least as good, though he doesn't borrow quite so many conventional pretty-pretties to adorn his verse.

Edinburgh: the Missing Monument

HOW a man of letters must respect the Scotch! No other people, not excepting the ancient Athenians or the modern Bostonians, have so respected men of letters. Waiters, navvies and bagmen, who were they born English would never have heard of Dickens or Tennyson, seem familiar with every circumstance in the lives, as well as the works, of Scott and Burns. Any man within fifty miles of Scott's numerous homes can tell you the way to it and possibly (though I did not test this) the charge for admission; and an author in Edinburgh feels that he has reached the author's Paradise. Here do the poet, even the minor poet, and the novelist come into their own; streets, hotels, stations, are named in their honour; their memories are omnipresent and their monuments vie with the grandest. It is a great and a beautiful city; I can find only one (barring the Sunday closing) fault with it. I put it as a question. Why has Edinburgh no monument, or rather no noticeable monument, to Stevenson?

I should think that there is no town in the world which has so much commemorative architecture and

sculpture to the square mile as Edinburgh. For more than a century its inhabitants have been possessed with a delightful mania for beautifying the promenades of the living and celebrating the virtues of the dead. The hills of the City are thickly clad with feudal battlements and Grecian porticoes. You will see the dawn through an open classic arcade, the mid-day orb over a mediaeval keep, the sunset fretted with Gothic spires and towers. There are vast circular halls that might have pleased Justinian, tall columns that might have excited the envy of Trajan, the fluted pillar, the arch, the broken pediment, the cross, the obelisk: and almost all are memorials. So also, in the nature of things, are the statues. These are in number as the sands of the sea. They throng the gardens of Prince's-street, the squares, the façades of public buildings; no eligible crossroad or patch of sky suitable for silhouetting lacks its doctor in marble or its philanthropist in bronze. There are soldiers, some; lawyers, physicians and theologians, many. There are also men of letters and philosophers. Most, naturally, are Scotsmen. Wellington and Nelson are exceptions: of the former there is an equestrian bronze, and the monument of Nelson is the Kew Pagoda of Edinburgh as the Scott Monument is the Albert Memorial. Even the enthusiastic writer who, for me, deputized the late Baedeker, could find no more to say of it than that it is "a structure more like an observatory or a lighthouse than a monument." Abraham Lincoln has a monument, and eke George IV., the

justification for this, apparently, being that he once visited Edinburgh. Charles II. and Prince Albert stand in these streets, Livingstone and Pitt, David Hume, Dugald Stewart, Allan Ramsay, "Christopher North," two publishers and a dog that died of grief. Royal personages sometimes excepted, no doubt all these excellent men, as also the animal, deserved well of Edinburgh, and of the human race. The more memorials the merrier, if the commemorated be worthy; Edinburgh has been prolific of talent and virtue, and she is a perfect frame for monumental art. Moreover, she cannot be accused, in a general way of doing otherwise than handsomely by literature. The Scott Monument is only less conspicuous than the Castle, which has an unfair pull owing to its eminence; and if a Greek peripteral temple is not quite the most congruous of conceivable memorials to Burns, the Burns Monument was at least well meant, is large and conspicuous, and, at a distance, looks uncommonly well. But where is Stevenson?

I do not suggest that Edinburgh, merely because it is the capital town, should possess a statue of every Scottish worthy who ever existed. She need not have had a statue of James Watt, who could reasonably be left to Glasgow and Greenock. If she has no statue — and there may be one — to James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, after all, kept sheep in Ettrick and now cows in the Cowgate. She may, without thinking of emulation, contemplate the im-

posing effigy of a ram which stands in the market place at Moffat, or the equally impressive (and I hope equestrian) statue of Sir Henry Dalziel which will some time grace the market-place of Kirkcaldy. But she ought to make a point, and she has made rather a point, of overlooking nobody of importance who was born in Edinburgh or who long resided there, or did important work there, or was a benefactor to the City. And surely Stevenson might come in under any of these categories.

He was born in Edinburgh, he went to school in Edinburgh, he was an undergraduate at Edinburgh University. And above all he loved the City and everything within reach of it. There is nothing more convincing in his last letters from Samoa than those passages, in which, overshadowed by death, he told one correspondent that he knew he would never see Auld Reekie again, and asked another to go down to the burn at Glencorse and look into the water for him. He had his limitations, and I for one am not of the unqualified admirers. But if there is one thing more than another that he did, and did marvellously, it was the depiction of Edinburgh and her borders, done so vividly that a stranger who has read him knows them place by place when he sees them: the wynds and closes off the High Street where such as the Body-Snatchers lived, the discreet Georgian squares and crescents of the New Town where young Edinburgh quarrelled with its dour father, the roads that led through meadows and

small woods to the Pentlands and the desolate Lammermuirs, the little pier by Queensferry, the Bass Rock. He felt a profound affection, and he communicated his affection. Edinburgh was perhaps more to him than to Scott himself, and he certainly showed us more of Edinburgh as we know it. All this is known to Scotsmen, and, judging by the bookseller's counters, there is a larger consumption of his books in Edinburgh than in any other town in the world. Yet Edinburgh has not put up a monument to him. There is a tablet on a church wall, there may be a plaque on some one of the houses in which he lived, and Swanston is beautifully kept and garnished by a devotee. But there is no statue, no Greek temple, no decorated pile, no Duomo: at least if there be such as thing it must be too recent for my guide book or my local interlocutors to have heard of it and either too small and secluded to be noticed or too huge to be suspected. One always likes to guard oneself on these occasions, and I shall be only too happy to find that I have made a ridiculous mistake. Perhaps that new church was the thing . . . or that sumptuous cinema in the Babylonian Renaissance style. If I am wrong I withdraw; but if I am right I am very much puzzled. Do they want a subscription started in England?

Verhaeren

A STUPID accident has robbed the world of Emile Verhaeren. Before the war probably not one Englishman knew his name for every hundred who were familiar with the works of his fellow-Belgian Maeterlinck. Whether the war has greatly increased his reading public here I do not know; possibly not, for a great deal of his poetry is rather tough work for the ordinary foreigner. But at least his importance is now appreciated. He came to England shortly after the outbreak of the war, and spent many months here. He contributed to English papers — I remember particularly an article in the *Daily News* and a fine poem on aeroplanes over Antwerp in *Poetry and Drama* — and he made several public appearances. At a Labour meeting in October, 1914, he recited — or read — his heroic poem, *Ceux de Liege,* in which steel-cupolas probably made their first appearance in verse. I met him once or twice. He was a man whom, if one had that habit, one would be tempted to describe as an "old dear"; absolutely natural, gentle, kindly, free from the burden of a reputation, interested in everything, willing to talk and to listen without a trace of pontifical authority or spurious concentration; if anything, a little timid. He had a fine head: greying hair, lean, broad, bony face, with prominent cheekbones and aquiline nose, and a sensitive mouth

and chin half-covered by a flowing, uncultivated moustache. The marks of suffering and thought were on the face: the forehead was wrinkled, the eyebrows raised, the lids drooped rather sadly over the contemplative eyes.

Verhaeren began as a painter of Flemish scenes, with something of seventeenth century Flanders about them. After a period of hankering for the safety of Catholicism he plunged, in the late 'eighties, into an abyss of melancholy and pessimism bordering on madness. Part of this time he spent in London, which usually depresses sensitive foreigners. The despair of the three books of this period ends with *Les Apparus dans mes Chemins*. His later volumes are the work of a man who accepts and exults over life, even at its foulest. His pictures, in *Les Campagnes Hallucinês, Les Villes Tentaculaires* and *Les Villages Illusoires,* of the deterioration of the countryside and the spread of the urban fester, have their gloomy side, and, as a Socialist, he detested capitalistic society; but the poet in him took a fierce pleasure in any manifestation of energy, however misdirected. *Le Multiple Splendeur* and *Les Visages de la Vie* are lighter, more radiant, and some of his love-poetry is very simple, tender and happy. Of his plays the best known is *Le Cloître*. Even Frenchmen sometimes find him obscure and knotty. But his difficult passages are never deliberately so; they are the strong writhings of a Laocoön in the toils of the serpents of Spirit and Matter.

A certain amount has been written about him in English. There exists a volume of poetical translations from him by Miss Alma Strettell, and Messrs. Constable have recently published an interesting prose translation of his " Love Poems " by Mr. F. S. Flint. Constable also published, some years ago, what is probably the best monograph yet written on him: that by Stefan Zweig, a young Viennese poet and critic. It is rather a lopsided book: exuberant, precipitous, festooned with a tropical profusion of metaphors. The author is an idolator, and, like all idolators, rather anthropomorphic. But he is often right, always interesting and sometimes illuminating. Herr Zweig is not a Frenchman or a Belgian. His principal error of omission is his failure to consider Verhaeren's poetry as French verse. His main error of the other sort was made when he claimed the poet as a pillar of German culture: a view perhaps that he may, by now, have modified.

A Shakespeare MS.?

SIR EDWARD MAUNDE THOMPSON believes that in the British Museum there is a holograph MS. in Shakespeare's handwriting. The arguments in favour of this are to be found in a volume (*Shakespeare's Handwriting*) recently issued by the Oxford University Press. The general question of Shakespeare's fist was dealt with by Sir Edward in a contribution to *Shakespeare's England:* I remember that he argued, not altogether to my satisfaction, that the Bard, in spite of appearances, really wrote a bold and fluent — I forget if he said elegant — hand. The present volume is an expansion of that study; and is " strictly paleographical, . . . altogether eschewing criticism of a literary nature."

" ' My researches,' says Sir Edward, ' in due course led to an examination of the well-known addition, written in an unidentified hand, to the MS. play of *Sir Thomas More,* now the Harleian MS. 7368 in the British Museum. Nearly half-a-century has passed since, in, 1871, this addition was brought to public notice in a contribution to *Notes and Queries* by the Shakespearean student, Richard Simpson, who suggested it was an autograph composition of Shakespeare. This attribution could not be substan-

tiated at the time; the key of the problem was still undiscovered. When I lately renewed acquaintance with the Harleian MS. it was with a lively interest that I recognized in the handwriting of the addition certain features which I had already noted in Shakespeare's signatures. A careful study of the MS. ensued, and in this monograph I have set out my reasons for concluding that at length we have found what so many generations have vainly desired to behold — a holograph MS. of our great English poet.' "

The MS. in question is portion of a play most of which is by Anthony Munday. Of 20 sheets, 13 are in the author's handwriting. There are several editions of the play, of which the latest is Dr. Greg's (1911), and the MS. was reproduced in collotype in the *Tudor Facsimile Texts* in 1910, by Mr. J. S. Farmer.

Three of the pages attributed to Shakespeare are reproduced by the present author. Into his long and elaborate comparison of the script with Shakespeare's signatures one cannot enter here, but it is extremely convincing in its cumulative effect. And there is certainly a good deal in the text which anybody might wager to be Shakespeare if he came across it unawares. More is quelling a riot of apprentices who are demanding the expulsion of aliens, and addresses them thus (I modernize the language):

Grant them removed, and grant that this your noise
Hath chid down all the majesty of England.
Imagine that you see the wretched strangers,
Their babies at their backs, and their poor luggage,
Plodding to the ports and coasts for transportation,
And that you sit as kings in your desires,
Authority quite silenced by your brawl,
And you, in ruff of your opinions clothed,
What had you got? I'll tell you, you had taught
How insolence and strong hand should prevail,
How ordered should be quelled, and by this pattern
Not one of you should live an aged man,
For other ruffians as their fancies wrought
With self-same hand, self-reasons, and self-right,
Would shark on you, and men like ravenous fishes
Would feed on one another.

This is undeniably Shakespearean in temper, argument, language and prosody. I observe, by the way, that Shakespeare's lazy habit of putting, for a signature, a few letters and then a shorthand squiggle is paralleled here. He calls More (Moor), in one place, " Moo " — feeling that that is quite sufficient to make his meaning clear.

A Seaside Library

"NO," I thought, "I won't take any books with me. I want a rest. I shall swim. I shall catch fish. There is sure to be a billiard-room in that pub., and pretty certain to be a few people who play bridge. The overtaxed brain must be allowed relaxation. So good-bye, Plato; good-bye, Spinoza; good-bye, Samuel Rawson Gardiner; good-bye, Freud. I won't take any of you." I had been in the place twenty-four hours, and had plumbed the depths of my neighbours' incapacity to play any games of skill or chance (except possibly — I did not ask this — loo and vingt-et-un), when, sauntering down the main, and indeed the only, street, I caught sight of the words, "Grocer, Chemist, Tobacconist, Draper, and Circulating Library." It would be ungracious, I felt, to let such versatility go unrecognized. Besides, one might as well take a novel or two out with one in the boat. It might make the intervals between the bites seem a little shorter. So in I went.

A young girl with a pigtail escorted me past the Quaker Oats and the Gold Flakes, under a little doorway and into a back room. "A shilling deposit, and twopence on each book," she said; and

left me to the shelves. There were books there all right: about two thousand of them, reaching from floor to ceiling on both sides. There was no sort of order, alphabetical or otherwise, so it was no good expecting to find a particular author right off. The only thing for it was beginning somewhere and going steadily along the rows.

B. M. Croker: yes, I think I read a great many of hers in my youth. They were about penniless young ladies going to India and getting married. It is no good tackling this one. *The Gateless Barrier,* by Lucas Malet: that was about spiritualism, and pretty thorough rubbish it was; I shall probably come to *Sir Richard Calmady* presently, but I shall give him a miss too. *The Iron Pirate:* I liked that rather, but it would be a pity not to like it so much now. I feel the same about *Saracinesca, The Witch of Prague,* and *In the Palace of the King,* which are all in a lump together where some late devotee has replaced them. Marion Crawford, upon whose every word my childhood hung, I dare not attempt you again; even *A Cigarette Maker's Romance* and the chronicle of *Mr. Isaacs* (who enjoyed Kant and deluded me, for a time, into the belief that I should like him too) will be more dear to the memory if they are not restored to sight. *Count Hannibal:* that was the man who either massacred somebody or escaped massacre on St. Bartholomew's Day. He had a great square jaw and eyes that made you jump; and women cowered and obeyed when he emitted a short, sharp oath

or looked like emitting one. William Black I never liked at any time, so nothing by him need detain me. *Flames?* No. *Dodo?* Oh dear, no. *Ships That Pass in the Night?* No. There was edelweiss in it, and an old man who, like Lord Randolph Churchill, read nothing but Gibbon. Queen Victoria thought highly of it, but I don't want to read it again. Nor *Red Pottage* either. The husband and the other man (I think) had a duel. They drew straws, and the man with the shortest straw had to kill himself. What the lady thought about it I don't remember. But one of them was a Lord, New Zealand came in somewhere, and at suitable places in the conversation a moth would flutter or a kingfisher flash by. It is by touches like these that one can distinguish really imaginative literature, but I am not tempted.

It is not reasonable to expect a man at this date to return to *A Yellow Aster,* or *Moths* by Ouida. As for *The Silence of Dean Maitland,* the predicament of that respected ecclesiastic with the undisclosed sin on his conscience is still fresh in my mind, and I still remember how my elders, when it first came out, debated whether such a book ought to be written, and whether Maxwell Gray was a man or a woman. Of *The Sorrows of Satan* I recall little of the plot, except that the Devil was a gentleman. I think that the first sentences were: "Do you know what it is to be poor? Not with that — poverty that — on ten thousand a year, but with that grinding poverty that," etc. How many years ago is it that that im-

mortal paragraph, reproduced in facsimile from the author's own script, appeared in the *Strand Magazine,* with pictures of the great novelist in various postures? It would be Ethel M. Dell now, I suppose; but they don't seem to keep Miss Dell's works in this Circulating Library, of which the circulation appears to have stopped many, many years since. They keep instead Frankfort Moore and G. B. Burgin.

Anthony Hope now. Here is *The Intrusions of Peggy.* There was a grizzled inventor who lived in the Temple, and he had a daughter who shone like a sunbeam amidst the dusty shades of the law. Anthony Hope, who was very nearly a first-rate writer, must have put it better than that; but I'm sure that is what it was about. Seton Merriman now. This is better. But will or will not a reperusal of *The Vultures* and *Roden's Corner* diminish the respect that still survives in me for him? He gave me immense pleasure at the time; can I risk it? I don't know.

With meditations like the above I roamed up and down before the frayed and wrinkled backs of these veterans, fascinated by so systematic a recovery of the familiar. Then I remember that the sun was shining in a blue sky, only slightly fleeced with cloud; that the salt wind blowing shoreward was driving broken sunlight over the waves; that there was as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it; and that I must really take care of my health. Catching sight

of *She* and *Many Cargoes,* which I have read at least ten times apiece, but am always good for again, I detached them from their faded companions and took them into the front shop, meditating upon the astonishing sluggishness of this store, where even Mrs. Barclay had not yet penetrated and Garvice was a cloudy speculation in the far future.

I paid my one-and-fourpence and stepped out on to the cobble-stones. As I passed into the sun, it occurred to me that it was not surprising that even the minor works in this library were like old friends. For — and things like these do strangely remain known, yet for a time, unrelated — I spent a summer in this village fifteen years ago.

A Voice from the Past

SUMMER having set in with its usual severity, I sat down with Mr. John F. Tattersall's edition of Charles Macfarlane's *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* (Murray). It has something of the interest of Pompeii and Mycenæ. It was written sixty years ago by a man who had been a fairly well-known author and traveller with a wide acquaintance and ended his days as a Brother of the Charterhouse. When his active career was over he dictated his memories of the eminent and peculiar people he had met. What became of the MS. when he died we do not know; for all practical purposes it was lost until 1916. A provincial bookseller bought it with a lot of ledgers at a country sale — thus saving it from probable destruction — and the present editor was struck by its description in the bookseller's catalogue as a manuscript mentioning the names of Shelley and Keats. The result is that we have here a volume of new stories about many of the celebrities of the Regency and succeeding periods.

This Macfarlane was a Tory and a stout Churchman. He disliked extreme opinions, cranks and solemn persons; but if a man appeared to be a decent soul opinions were not much of a barrier. He was not at all a theorizer: though he would talk politics

and literature over his port, he was not the sort of man who would be living in a rarefied atmosphere of speculation most of his time. The result is that it was the normal rather than the abnormal aspects of men that he most noticed and that, indeed, would naturally be most often presented to him. He recognized genius; but most of his stories about genius are of the kind which remind us that even the most highly-endowed of our ancesters occasionally behaved like people in 'buses: that Shelley, for instance, was not uninterruptedly posing for his portrait with his shirt open at the neck.

One can scarcely say that the new anecdotes of Shelley and Keats, thus unexpectedly recovered, are highly important; though they may quite possibly make a brace of professors feel that such " new material " justifies new biographies. There is a touching account of an afternoon on the seashore with Shelley, who sat despondently looking out over the waves, " with the glowing sunset shining full on his pale, haggard face." The excursion was terminated by a visit to a macaroni factory, where Shelley showed (I suppose one might) " all the hilarity and fun of a schoolboy." Mary Shelley Macfarlane found " a very delicate, elegant, charming person; and there seemed to be great affection and an entire confidence between them." Shelley at this stage was, we are informed, " a practical and daily practising Christian " and " an assiduous reader of the New Testament "; the one thing needful was the alteration of

a few words in his vocabulary. It is surprising but refreshing to find a man describing Keats as " one of the most cheery and plucky little fellows I ever knew." " I firmly believe," he says, " that by the side of any friend Keats would have faced a battery, and would have stood under a shower of cannon-balls, chain-shot, canister or grape " — which is sufficiently specific. Keats, like Shelley, appears to have owed some happy moments to macaroni:

" He had intense enjoyment in halting close to the Capuan Gate, and in watching a group of *lazzaroni* or labouring men as, at a stall with fire and cauldron by the roadside in the open air, they were disposing of an incredible quantity of macaroni, introducing it in long, unbroken strings into their capacious mouths, without the intermediary of anything but their hands. ' I like this,' said he; ' these hearty fellows scorn the humbug of knives and forks. Fingers were invented first. Give them some *carlini* that they may eat more! Glorious sight! How they take it in!' "

Macfarlane's description of Godwin is as familiar and cheerful as his references to the plucky little fellow:

" Old Godwin greatly preferred a quiet game of whist in a cosy corner to conversation. In his manner he was a quiet, retiring, unpretentious old gentleman."

He is alleged to have thrown over his early principles bodily. It is at any rate a relief to know that he played cards.

Once, when he alludes casually and without further explanation to " Miss Crump, the authoress," I feel a grievance against Macfarlane: those four words make me hunger for more. But as a rule he does not drag anybody's name in unless he has something to say about him. Some of his stories are amusing. Rogers, the poet, a notoriously slow writer, headed a long poem *Lines Written at Pæstum:* Sydney Smith, discovering that Rogers was only at Pæstum for a few hours, said that this title must be mendacious, " for we all know that when he is delivered of a single couplet, straw is spread in St. James's Place, and his friends call with anxious inquiries, and are told that he is as well as can be expected after his labour." Macfarlane liked Leigh Hunt in spite of his dislike of Hunt's financial incompetence. Hunt described Landor, who owed £20,000, as " a very lucky fellow to have been able to get so much credit," and there is a delightful story of a fiver which the Carlyles were always lending Mrs. Hunt and which was at last kept in a separate case labelled " Hunt money." He respected Coleridge, found Wordsworth unexpectedly human and friendly, and had an immense affection for Tom Moore; but De Quincey he could not stand. His diatribes against that writer are not very interesting, but it is amusing to learn that (he never had

any money) " whenever he had engaged to write a magazine article or to do any other work for the booksellers, those gentlemen were almost certain to receive from him, in a day or two, a note stating that he was out of laudanum." This homely detail does not, I think, come into the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater.*

Macfarlane's descriptions are always sprightly. Their one defect is that, as a rule, they are too slight and short. One of the few exceptions is a long passage on Hartley Coleridge, the best — and the tenderest — chapter in the book. The picture is the usual one: the small, fragile man, gentle as a child, chivalrous, vivacious, a fine and learned talker, universally beloved; but continually drunk. When Macfarlane first went in search of him he was in a village inn, a small, seedy gentleman surrounded by gigantic waggoners and farmers. " The bibulous little sprite " went off to order a magnum of port for dinner and see the chill taken off it, and a farmer at once confided in the visitor his opinion of the " wonderful gentleman " who lived in a cottage and knew everybody for miles around:

" Some do say that he has more book-learning than Mr. Wordsworth or Professor Wilson, and that he can beat them hollow at verse-making. We all love him, sir, for he is so good and kind, and so fond of our children. We would do anything for our poet, that we would! But it's a great pity that

he is not more steady and more regular at his meals, for tippling, though only with this small ale, is bad on an empty stomach, and when he gets queer in the head he doesn't always know what he is about; more's the pity, for he's a gentleman, every inch of him, and would not hurt a worm."

Dipsomania, as a fellow-journalist said about the war, "has no doubt its seamy side." But a man of letters who got such an epitaph from such a source cannot be said to have been a complete failure in life. I had rather have been he than, say, Jeremy Bentham.

Francis Thompson's Method

A RECENT number of *The Dublin Review* contains a very interesting article on Francis Thompson's Note-Books, several fragmentary unpublished poems by Thompson being given. Thompson's note-books were almost his only property.

"They were a preoccupation, things to be remembered when he collected his hat and coat, or to be most anxiously retrieved when forgotten or mislaid. They were his other self; his companions through many solitary years; his life-work and his library; they were the only things he never discarded. The few volumes that came his way as a reviewer, when they overflowed more than a small shelf, would be sold, and if he changed his lodging nothing of account had to be removed save the many dozens of shabby exercise-books that filled a large tin box — dense piles of unstitched leaves covered with faded pencil-marks."

In these books — penny books lettered in "Stationers' Gothic" — he used to keep masses of quotations from authors of all ages — religious and profane — as well as the drafts of his poems.

Few poetical MSS. of modern times can have presented such difficulties to their editors as these. Masses of Thompson's sketches for poems still, I believe, remain undeciphered; or rather, unarranged. His ideas about order were peculiar. He would begin one poem at the beginning of a book and another at the end; the two would cross in the middle. He would cover a page with alternative suggestions for stanzas, lines and words — often mixed up with quite different stanzas or pieces of stanzas — strewn about in the most extraordinary order. He did not delete on the paper; deletion had gone on in his mind before he wrote. But he would put down in a little column half-a-dozen feasible variants of a word or a line and leave them there to be chosen from. " Sometimes," says the writer of the article, " where he found the pencillings of an old volume conveniently faded, he has turned it over and filled it again with new matter." Specimen stanzas of his well-known and beautiful cricket song are given, which show his method of working. But nobody could really get an idea of it who had not inspected these incredible little exercise-books. I contracted a headache from one of them myself not long ago when I spent an afternoon trying to put one of the jig-saws together. In the end it was clear that it was a poem, of, say, 20 stanzas, appearing in some such order as 1, 2, 6, 4, 15, variant of 2, 3, 19, 20, variant of 15, 14, 13, a disconnected verse which obviously wouldn't have gone in, 5, 7, 8, 16; verses 17 and 18 being missing, and notions for single lines being liberally

sprinkled about, sometimes at great distances from their natural homes. The scholars of the future will find these manuscripts a great quarry for emendations, theories of poetic craftsmanship, &c.

Tobacco

THE Western World waited a long time for tobacco. *Pithecanthropus erectus,* the first proprietor of the Piltdown skull, Buddha, the Pharaohs, Aristophanes, Caractacus, Rabelais, and Henry VIII. all did without it. Assyria never knew a hookah, and Rome Declined and Fell without suspecting that its historian would take snuff. Through one knows not how many ages the lean, red, unimagined men of America sat in circles on their haunches, with travelling-rugs around their shoulders, and sent up grey swirls of smoke to fade in the air, whilst our own fathers lived and died without discovering what to do with their hands and mouths. The swift and tremendous triumph of tobacco is not easy to express in a phrase. Statistics do not convey it. To realize it one should be in a crowd. Go to a great football match in mid-winter and look across the field at the grand stand. In full daylight a mist of smoke rises from it; as darkness begins to come over, it is dotted, first palely, then brightly, with little flames that leap and suddenly die. Sometimes twenty will be burning together for an instant, sometimes two; but always the torch is carried on. Multiply to the dimensions of the world, and one can catch a picture of the whole globe sprinkled uninter-

mittently with these little spurting fires: what more suitable name than Vestas? When Jean Nicot, Sir Ralph Lane, and Sir Walter Raleigh brought their dried leaves across the water, they had no thought of this.

Queen Elizabeth, as every traveller knows, spent the whole of her long reign in a feverish effort to sleep in the maximum number of four-poster beds. Charles II., after the Battle of Worcester, dedicated himself to a similar endeavour; whilst Cromwell had an arduous time of it stabling his horses in even the most secluded and inaccessible churches in order to provide every parish with its legend. Sir Walter Raleigh was another of these solicitous persons. When he smoked the pioneer pipe in his garden and his vigilant valet threw a jug of beer over him to put him out, the turn was, apparently so successful that it was repeated in all parts of the country, and even in Ireland. This, however, is an iconoclastic age, and Mr. Apperson* throws cold water on Sir Walter and on the story. But, whoever introduced what one may refrain from calling The Weed or Our Lady Nicotine, tobacco on fire was soon going like a house on fire. There is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare (who never mentions tobacco) smoked any more than there is to suppose that he did anything else; and Queen Elizabeth found her first and perhaps only experience of a pipe upsetting. But Bur-

* *A Social History of Smoking.* By G. L. Apperson. Secker.

leigh smoked, Spenser wrote of " divine Tabacco," Lilly described it as a " holy herb," smoking was soon general even in theatres, and within a generation of tobacco's introduction a satirist could say that among the qualifications for a gallant were " to take Tobacco well " and " to spit well." Naturally, so great and sudden a change of habits meant polemics in opposition. Burton of the *Anatomy* described tobacco as

" a plague, a mischief, a violent purger of goods, lands, health, hellish, devilish, and damned tobacco, the ruin and overthrow of body and soul."

Dekker called it a " beggarly Monarche of Indians, and setter-up of rotton lung'd chimney-sweepers "; and Sylvester wrote a poem entitled *Tobacco Battered and the Pipes Shattered (about their Ears that idlely Idolize so base and barbarous a Weed, or at Leastwise Over-Love so loathsome Vanitie) by A Volley of Holy Shot Thundered From Mount Helicon,* in which he suggested that it was only to be expected that " Tobacconists " should be drunkards and adulterers. (Mr. Apperson, by the way, does not appear to have noticed that Sylvester anticipated Porson's celebrated joke — which he quotes — about τῳ βακχῳ.) It was these wild men that Ben Jonson was ridiculing when he made a character in one of his plays swear that four people had died of smoking in one house in one week, and that one of them had " voided a bushel of soot." But the cap-

tain of them was Ben's monarch, James I., whose *Counterblaste to Tobacco* is a very hearty piece of invective. He asked why we should be "mooved to imitate the barbarous and beastly manners of the wilde, godless and slavish Indians, especially in so vile and stinking a custome?" Non-smokers were annoyed by smokers who at meals made "the filthy smoke and stinke thereof to exhale athwart the dishes and infect the aire"; and wives either had to corrupt their own sweet breath with tobacco "or else resolve to live in a perpetuall stinking torment." James' last sentence was certainly the most eloquent peroration — it is not saying a great deal — ever perpetrated by an English king:

"A custome lothsome to the eye, hateful to the Nose, harmefull to the braine, dangerous to the Lungs, and in the blacke stinking fume thereof, neerest resembling the horrible Stigian smoke of the pit that is bottomlesse."

The struggle went on. In 1621, during a Commons debate, two knights urged total Prohibition, one of them saying that tobacco was now "so common that he hath seen ploughmen take it as they are at plough." Prohibition was not, however, adopted; the nearest approach to it under the British Flag was a Puritan Colonial law of Connecticut restricting the use of tobacco to bona-fide travellers. A man could have one pipe if he went ten miles, but never two pipes in a day. In England itself, by 1650,

smoking seems to have been permitted even in the House of Commons itself.

The unfashionable classes never dropped it again; draymen, ploughmen, minor officials, country clergymen and landlords, eccentric dons and authors, stuck to their clay pipes through all the changes of upper-class custom. The turn of the tide amongst the polite began soon after the Restoration. A snuffbox was more manageable than a clay pipe, which you could not carry about with you very easily and which in any case might soil your clothes; and, in an age when women were at once fastidious and influential, regard for their wishes must have had something to do with it. I have never tried eighteenth-century tobacco but it is likely that tobacco was in bad odour because there was bad odour in tobacco. In garrets, cellars, taverns, and country rectories the " clouds of incense " still rose. The seventeenth-century Buckinghamshire parson who, running short of tobacco, cut up his bell-ropes and smoked them would have found congenial company among such successors as Dr. Farmer, Master of Emmanuel and author of the fine Essay on Shakespeare's Learning, who always spent the day smoking with the farmers when he visited his country church to do duty, and used to greet them weekly with: " I am going to read prayers, but shall be back by the time you have made the punch." The proletariat had its pipe and clung to it with frenzy; when a Bill imposing an excise on tobacco was thrown out, all the church bells in Derby

were rung; they did not realize, apparently, that the best way of guaranteeing the future of your vices is to give the State a vested interest in them. But plum-coloured coats and fine ruffles were not defiled by the plebeian habit. Snuff was paramount in Society, from the Throne downwards: Queen Charlotte was always referred to by her sons as "Old Snuffy." As late as the 'forties Wellington issued a very ungrammatical injunction to commanding officers to stop their juniors from smoking; that an undergraduate of Trinity was sent down for smoking a cigar during service in the College chapel is perhaps not so strange. The final defeat of the "Anti-Tobacconists" came with the introduction of more perfect implements — the cigar, the cigarette, and, ultimately, the briar pipe. Victory was gradual. Queen Victoria, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Ruskin did not smoke. Men, for a time, did not light their cigars until they had shut their doors behind them; they changed into embroidered caps and jackets in order to avoid having their hair and their ordinary coats permeated with the odour of the herb; they refrained from smoking before ladies, and the idea that smoking was vulgar and indecent still leaves a few traces behind it, as in the absurd rule of some Cambridge colleges that smoking is not allowed in the courts before dark. The briar — made from the root of the *bruyer,* or French white heath — was the weapon with which the smokers finally routed their opponents. Today there is nothing monstrous in Charles Lamb's wish that his last breath should

be drawn in through a pipe and exhaled in a pun; and a Kingsley would not have to conceal caches of pipes under bushes and hedges on his rural walks, but would emerge from the rectory with the vulcanite between his teeth. In one only respect we have not yet equalled the achievements of our ancestors. No boy at Eton has, in our time, been flogged for refusing to smoke. But the precedent for that occurred in 1665 during the Great Plague, against which tobacco was considered a defence.

Mr. Apperson confines his attention to England. Had he gone beyond these shores, he might have found some curious facts. In seventeenth-century Russia, for example, smoking was forbidden under penalty of having the nose cut off, a penalty which might have been deemed more appropriate to snuff-taking. In Persia, formerly, smoking was a capital offence, the belief being held that it made people infertile. The sections on Smoking in Church and Smoking by Women are very interesting; in the remarks on the medicinal use of tobacco I miss (perhaps I have overlooked) a notice of the fact that at one time doctors used to prescribe "syrup of tobacco" for various ailments; those who occasionally take involuntary sips of this syrup will shudder at the thought. Mr. Apperson's remarks on the old tobacconists' signs are very interesting; the Black Boys, the Highlanders, and the Sir Walter Raleighs have now almost all disappeared. The survivors lead a solitary and unhonoured life; the last of the

London Highlanders stands outside a linoleum emporium, and a romantic tobacconist in the centre of London who recently tried to fix up a wooden effigy of Sir Walter outside his shop found that passers-by would insist on breaking off its protuberant parts with their walking-sticks. Tobacco is now completely victorious. Cigarettes are served out as rations to our troops, and the old female objection has so thoroughly broken down that the next Great Offensive against the habit may possibly be based on the contention that it is effeminate. The result of the general spread of smoking, however, is that interest in it is less keen. You cannot be an enthusiast for a habit that is shared by the whole human race. Mr. Apperson, who writes in the traditional style, does occasionally refer to the virtues of smokers as though they were still a sort of eclectic fraternity. But that is now anachronistic. The Kaiser is one of his fellow-smokers, and the late George Smith was probably another. It is as absurd to talk now of the geniality and reasonableness of Smokers as it would be to propound the peculiar philosophic powers of men with two legs, or to suggest that the British Constitution is kept intact mainly owing to the efforts of those members of the community whose hair is neither green nor purple. A History of Sleeping is inconceivable; the time will come when smoking also will cease to have a history. A few more club libraries have to be thrown open to it; a few more restaurants have to abandon their silly bias against pipes; theatres have to come into line with

music-halls; and the pipe, now forcing an entrance among middle-class women-workers, may possibly win the last of its conquests. Beyond this no future "history" is easily conceivable for tobacco; unless it goes out of fashion again, which seems most unlikely. It has become an integral and universal element in the social life of mankind, which has decided that, on the whole, it is worth going on with an inflamed palate, a furred tongue, a husky throat, and a deadened sense of smell. And it will, possibly, have little more literature. This last fact, however, cannot be deplored, for good panegyrics of it are few. For myself I like as well as any of its eulogies the following terse epigram recorded by Steinmetz of *The Smoker's Guide:*

Poor wretch! I don't fancy that anything pays
For toiling and moiling; I live all my *days*
A sort of a god, with my bakky and jug,
And as jolly and snug as a bug in a rug.

That dithyramb was the work of a British Peer — Lord Southesk.

Charles Churchill

I OBSERVE in a new biography of Wilkes a surprising reference to his friend Churchill. " He was," says the author,

" a dull fellow at the best, without a spark of humour, having little merit save a species of rugged vehemence."

Probably most who see it will take this judgment at its face-value, for Churchill is very little read now. But I feel I must lift up my small voice in protest, even though it fade away into nothing in a week.

The Rev. C. Churchill, in his day the most popular of satirists, had several sparks of humour, wrote remarkably skilful verse, and in *Gotham* even produced what Cowper, who was fairly fastidious, called " a noble and beautiful " poem. He was not an altogether admirable or pleasant person: few satirists are. He did not invariably attack things that ought to be attacked: few satirists do. Nevertheless, though he was malicious, foul-mouthed, debauched, and addicted to lucrative hack-work — in short, a thorough disgrace to the cloth — he had a sense of humour, and he was not always a dull poet. He was good enough to be entitled to a place in the

notable succession of satirists, from Hall and Donne to Marvell and Oldham, from Dryden and Pope to Byron, who have exposed the vices of society and the weaknesses of their enemies in the rhymed pentameter couplet.

Churchill was born in 1731. He was extraordinarily prolific. This at least had to be acknowledged by Dr. Johnson, who liked neither his morals nor his politics: "To be sure he is a tree that cannot produce good fruit: he only bears crabs. But, sir, a tree that produces a great many crabs is better than a tree which produces only a few." His most celebrated poem was the *Rosciad,* a metrical treatise on contemporary actors, which is more vigorous, and I should think more truthful, than any dramatic critic would dare to write in an age of libel-actions. It wants a good many explanatory footnotes, and its wit can scarcely be called delicate; but it still makes very good reading. There are good passages in *The Ghost* and *The Duellist.* My own favourite, however, is *The Prophecy of Famine,* a fantasia on Scotland and the Scotch which beats in extravagance anything else which the mid-century peaceful invasion of Scots called forth from the subjected English. Here the Tory Johnson and the demagogic Churchill were on common ground:

Waft me, some muse, to Tweed's inspiring stream,
Where all the little Loves and Graces dream;
Where, slowly winding, the dull waters creep,

And seem themselves to own the powers of sleep;
Where on the surface lead, like feathers, swims;
There let me bathe my yet unhallowed limbs,
As once a Syrian bathed in Jordan's flood,
Wash off my native stains, correct that blood
Which mutinies at call of English pride,
And, deaf to prudence, rolls a patriot tide.

But his finest efforts in exaggeration come when he describes the utter nakedness and hungriness of Scotland:

Jockey, whose manly, high-boned cheeks to crown,
With freckles spotted, flamed the golden down,
With meikle art could on the bag-pipe play,
E'en from the rising to the setting day;
Sawney as long without remorse could bawl
Home's madrigals, and ditties from Fingal;
Oft at his strains, all natural though rude,
The Highland lass forgot her want of food,
And, whilst she scratch'd her lover into rest,
Sank pleased, though hungry, on her Sawney's breast.
Far as the eye could reach, no tree was seen,
Earth, clad in russet, scorn'd the lively green;
The plague of locusts they secure defy,
For in three hours a grasshopper must die;
No living thing, whate'er its food, feasts there,
But the cameleon, who can feast on air,
No birds, except as birds of passage, flew;
No bee was known to hum, nor dove to coo:
No streams, as amber smooth, as amber clear,

Were seen to glide or heard to warble here;
Rebellion's spring, which through the country ran,
Furnish'd, with bitter draughts, the steady clan;
No flowers embalm'd the air, but one white rose,
Which, on the tenth of June, by instinct blows;
By instinct blows at morn, and when the shades
Of drizzly eve prevail, by instinct fades.

The white rose is the flower of Jacobitism, which, it is suggested, is not remembered for 364 days in the year when something is to be made out of the House of Windsor. The climax of the passage is reached with the line:

And half-starved spiders prey'd on half-starved flies.

The imagery of the poet describing national penury and leanness could scarcely go farther than that.

Churchill died at thirty-three, principally of drunkenness. He wrote his own epitaph, " Life to the last enjoy'd, here Churchill lies," and painted his own portrait with great force in *Independence*. He was a hearty, honest ruffian; he was loyal to his friends and, after his fashion, loved his country.

Commonplace Books

A COMMONPLACE book is defined by Webster as " a book in which passages or events are set down or recorded as important for future use or reference," and Swift is quoted: " Whatever, in my reading, occurs concerning this . . . I do never fail to set it down by way of commonplace." " Important " is a word with an important sound; though it would apply, no doubt, to commonplace books like that enormous one of Robert Southey's which is full of very long and usually dull extracts from works of philosophy, divinity and history. The lexicographer is vague as to the sources of the " passages set down." But there is, to me at any rate, a flavour of the second-hand about the term, and I should not apply it to a notebook in which a man put down nothing but his own happy thoughts, with an eye on future platforms, dinner-tables or articles, or merely with a view to private self-gratification. One suspects that this type of notebook is more common amongst modern men of letters than the old book of extracts. One does know some writers whose strange profuseness of quotation suggests that they stick to the old custom on the sly — since, for some reason imperceptible to me, it seems to be considered altogether more tal-

ented to fork a quotation out of your memory than to rummage for one in an old notebook. But the habit has evidently declined. Perhaps we have too little leisure. Perhaps we have lost the literary collector's spirit. Perhaps we are too lazy. As far as I am concerned this last is certainly the cause. Twice in the first bloom of my manhood I decided to go through my books, turn up the pages which enthusiasm had dog's-eared or otherwise defaced, and tabulate " for future use or reference " the best remarks of the world's authors. The two books are still with me. One begins with twenty pages of Gibbon, beautifully transcribed and with neat lines ruled between each slice of cynicism or profanity; and thereafter the pages cry to be filled and none heareth them. The other similarly opens with flowers from Lord Verulam, and then slides down into the mean status of an address-book. One simply cannot. It is too much bother. Henceforward, if I am observed quoting Gibbon or Bacon, it will be clear where the quotations come from — though, as a fact, I seldom remember my little compilations until too late.

Mr. Austin Dobson's *A Bookman's Budget* is a commonplace book by any definition: and a very characteristic one. We all of us know people who fill their apartments with every sort of object of art: Chinese dragons, Hepplewhite chairs, bureaux and commodes, plates, jugs, basins, gods, swords, paper-knives, Greek heads, busts of Rousseau, chessmen, steel-engravings, miniatures, lecterns, old morocco

bindings, oak, ebony, ivory, malachite, alabaster, Lord knows what, and water-colours by the proprietor. Of such the prime example was Horace Walpole: and since he was a man of taste, a man with likes and dislikes for which he could give reasons, we may be certain that his collection, however variegated in origins and character, and however preponderatingly designed for " reference " rather than for " use," had somehow a unity about it which differentiated it from the limbless and trunkless higgledy-piggledy of the old curiosity shop. Mr. Dobson's volume is precisely such a collection of works of art and " curios." Anything goes in as long as it has amused, touched or interested him, including passages from his own books. And all the oddments in this strange miscellany are linked by personality. It is with something of a shock that one comes across a batch of war-poems, about Belgium, &c. But it is all right: even when he is writing a poem about Belgium this inveterate connoisseur makes it a Roundel. It is not very successful, but no one else could have done it without being preposterous.

Mr. Dobson's extracts come out of hundreds of authors of all ages. But the eighteenth century is dominant. His illustrations are mostly silhouettes, with a portrait of Lord George Gordon and a quaint Blake; and, making an extract from an author so modern as William Morris, he characteristically pitches on Morris's pretty inscription for a four-poster bed. There are a great number of anecdotes

about men of letters, statesmen and clergymen, and many odd literary collector's " facts." In one place we get a little group of extracts illustrating the futility of pedants and cocksure critics. Macaulay in 1850, said that since 1825 — Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson and Browning, not to mention others, were hard at it — no English book had been written which would be read in 1900. In another we are presented with the fact that Dr. Arnold had read *Humphrey Clinker* fifty times. I don't think this fact comes into Mr. Lytton Strachey's biographical study of Arnold; it gives him quite another complexion. *Humphrey Clinker,* too; a book which, compared with *Peregrine Pickle,* has been neglected, but a far finer piece of art. Mr. Dobson hunts up the origin of the phrase, " the Republic of Letters," makes notes on the will of Andrew Millar, the publisher, on family pews, on London topography, on the pronunciation of the word " Pamela," on Fielding's tomb, and on Cobbett's observation that " foot-notes " should be written " fool-notes." Then he turns aside to do justice to Tom Hood and — a stranger and more striking performance — to look for and to discover a really fine passage from the works of George Augustus Sala. " Cromwell's Motto " and " Literary Breakfasts " elbow sonnets by Andrew Lang and epigrams by deceased Frenchmen, and almost on the last page we are informed that on April 4, 1663, Pepys gave to seven or eight guests a dinner (prepared by a single maid, ye housewives!) consisting of: —

" a fricasee of rabbits and chickens, a leg of mutton boiled, three carps in a dish, a great dish of a side of lambe, a dish of roasted pigeons, a dish of four lobsters, three tarts, a lamprey pie (a most rare pie), a dish of anchovies, good wine of several sorts, and all things mighty noble and to my great content."

The scattered poems are mostly graceful. The short epigrams are the best, particularly the four on Art, which are extremely close imitations of the real eighteenth century article. As, for instance, *Silent Criticism:* —

I read my rhymes to Jack, who straight
Slips off to Sleep's dominion;
Then yawns, when I expostulate —
"Why sleep is . . . my opinion!"

But I cannot think Mr. Dobson's epitaph on Queen Victoria a masterpiece: —

Great Queen, great Lady, Mother most of all!
Beyond the turmoil of Earth's hopes and fears,
How should you need the tribute of our tears —
Our helpless, useless tears! But they must fall.

It is odd, incidentally, to run across this in the same week in which one encounters the statement in Sir C. Dilke's *Life* that after the Great White Queen's funeral a select quorum of the Privy Council met with relief, and an unwonted cheerfulness plain upon its face.

The Songs of the Trenches

THERE has been a general desire that somebody would collect the folk-songs of the Army. The thing has now been done. *Tommy's Tunes* (Erskine Macdonald) is described as " A Comprehensive Collection of Soldiers' Songs, Marching Melodies, Rude Rhymes, and Popular Parodies, Composed, Collected, and Arranged on Active Service with the B.E.F. by F. T. Nettleingham, 2nd Lt. R.F.C." As the title suggests Mr. Nettleingham has not specialized in any class of song. He gives not merely the songs which have come during the war from no one knows where, and the burlesques of music-hall ditties and hymns; but a number of traditional songs and some compositions, largely drawn from the R.F.C., that are obviously the work of clever individuals. These are interesting as extras. So are the old songs, but not all those to which Mr. Nettleingham refers as heirlooms of the Old Army are peculiarly Army songs, and some are widely diffused among the population. Among those for which he makes no such claim is *The Green Grass Grew All Round.* I suppose that collectors have printed it before. They may even have decided that it is an allegory, religious or otherwise, like *I Will Sing You One — O.* But I have certainly never seen it in print before. Yet it is one of

the most widely dispersed of our popular songs; whatever music-hall ballads come and go, this goes on, and you are liable to hear parties of youths singing it almost anywhere in the country. Several songs of this sort are given; but the greatest interest must lie in those queer, unique songs — whimsical, ironical, grumbling — which have come into being in the Army during the war, and many of which, in the true fashion of folk-poetry, exist in numerous versions.

The most famous of these, and the type of most of them, is *I Want to Go Home,* with its utter fed-upness. It was pretty early. I remember the first time I heard of it. A gunner officer (he is dead now) sent it to me, with the tune roughly dotted down. He said that his men would sing that melancholy tune very quietly and slowly when grooming their horses, and that he had never heard anything in his life which moved him more. The difference between various versions of it usually lies in the third line. Mr. Nettleingham gives "Where there are shells and Jack Johnsons galore"; of those I have heard, I think "For oh the Jack Johnsons, they make such a roar," sounds likelier to the general. The full verse is:

I want to go home
I want to go home
For oh! the Jack Johnsons they make such a roar
I don't want to go to the trenches no more,

I want to go over the sea
Where the Alleymans can't snipe at me.
Oh, my, I don't want to die,
I want to go home.

Another song, which would do equally well as the type, is that which appears on the wrapper of this book:

When this ruddy war is over,
O! how happy I shall be,

the tune of which seems to derive from *Massa's in the Cold Ground.* Mr. Nettleingham's discretion about "ruddy" is not altogether kept up; occasionally he admits things which make one think one is reading a collection of Tom D'Urfey's instead of a twentieth-century book. Of *Grousing,* another of the sort, the compiler says that Company Commanders have been known to suppress it "when men have spent long hours on the march." It is unmitigated. It goes to the tune of *Holy, Holy, Holy,* and the last verse is:

Marching, Marching, Marching,
Always ruddy well marching.
Marching all the morning,
And marching all the night.
Marching, Marching, Marching,
Always ruddy well marching,
Roll on till my time is up
And I shall march no more.

Another of the sort is, *Why Did We Join the Army?* —

Why did we join the Army, boys?
Why did we join the Army?
Why did we come to Salisbury Plain?
We must have been ruddy well balmy.
Fol-the-rol-lol, &c.

One of the most widespread is that which, sung to the tune of *The Church's One Foundation,* has been adapted to all sorts of branches, and of which one version is:

We are Fred Karno's Army,
A jolly fine lot we are;
Fred Karno is our Captain
Charlie Chaplin our O.C.
And when we get to Berlin,
The Kaiser he will say:
Hoch! Hoch! Mein Gott!
What a jolly fine lot
Are the 2 — 4th R.E., T.

In most variations the second couplet is:

We cannot fight, we cannot shoot,
What earthly use are we?

or words to that effect.

Of the adaptations of *The Tarpaulin Jacket,* the

cleverest is that in which the dying airman requests his mechanics to reassemble the engine, the parts of which are embedded in various sections of his body. A less literary one is:

Oh had I the wings of an Avro,
Chorus: " of an Avro."
Then far, far away I would soar,
" would soar."
Right off to my pals down in Holland
" in Holland."
And rest there the rest of the war,
" the war."

I cannot go on quoting indefinitely, but one may mention that even the little repetitive marching scraps are not omitted. Words and music are given of *Hoo-Ha* (" There's the man with the big red nose, Hoo Ha, Hoo Ha Ha! "), and *Left, Left,* which is about the most epigrammatic of the lot.

Mr. Nettleingham asks for supplementary songs. He has taken so much trouble with his collection that he has probably got almost everything that has had a general circulation. But there are no doubt many more good regimental ones. One that reached me from a Fusilier battalion the other day may or may not be a local adaptation of a song common to many regiments. It is a chorus only, to the tune of *Hold Your Hand Out, Naughty Boy,* and runs:

Hold your head down, Fusilier,
Hold your head down, Fusilier,
There's a bloody great Hun
With a bloody great gun
Who'll shoot you
Who'll shoot you:
There's a sniper up a tree
Waiting for you and me.
If you want to get back to your home any more,
Hold your head down, Fusilier.

It is sung in the London vernacular, and is certainly in the Flanders tradition.

It may be observed, by the way, that Mr. Nettleingham says in his preface — every soldier who has mentioned it to me has certainly said the same thing — that *Tipperary* "was never Tommy's song." It merely happened that a *Daily Mail* correspondent heard a few troops of the Expeditionary Force singing it at Boulogne. It was a chance that he did not hear other troops singing something else. In the anthologist's opinion the most popular song in the Army is, beyond question, *Annie Laurie*.

The Limits of Imitation

SOMEBODY suggests that it did not much matter if Stephen Phillips *was* a bit reminiscent of other poets at times, for Wordsworth was at his best when he was most Miltonic.

Let me observe at once that I have no sympathy at all with the kind of critics who are always nosing about after verbal plagiarism. Tennyson was thinking of these when he complained that it was impossible to remark that " the sea roars " without being informed as to the exact passage in Homer from which the observation had been stolen. It is ridiculous to suggest that all resemblances mean plagiarism; it is ridiculous also to hold that every plagiarism must necessarily be a reprehensible weakness. As everybody knows, all great poets have learnt from their predecessors, all have been influenced by their predecessors, and most have borrowed direct from their predecessors. And a good thing too. If a new and effective word, process of thought, rhythmical device, or stanza form is hit upon by one man, it is all to the good if other people make use of his discoveries. Writers may even, if they like, cold-bloodedly study the manner in which particular effects have been produced and endeavour to produce similar effects by similar means. There is no limit

to the use which an original writer can make of other writers. But he can escape the charge of imitation on one condition only: and that is that he should be more himself than anybody else. If he really *is* any good, we may identify things he owes to other people, but we shall *feel* his individuality all the time. We shall not, even when he is obviously plagiarizing, have the impression of one who has heard somebody's else's voice and is automatically mimicking it because he is dominated by it, or of one who has no natural force compelling him to express himself and who consequently sits down and makes things in conventional moulds. Taking any other basis, one would soon be led to the ridiculous view that there is no such thing as bad imitation.

Example is best. Suppose some admirer of Mr. Lloyd George or the Kaiser were to write an Ode to him in the course of which he said:

The light of the might of thy right burns bright like
the radiant bow of the god Apollo,
And deep in the dark of the dank and dim damp
dungeons of Death thy foemen lie,
And the flight of thy fleet sweet feet is fast and fast
is the wind of the wings that follow,
And loud the joy of the quenchless sea and the
mirth of the wide inexhaustible sky.

Or suppose that some one with a less favourable opinion of one of these eminent statesmen were to break out with:

He spake. And as by Indus banks some toad,
Beastly and venomous, before the sun
Sets purpure, and the clouds of heaven dark
Spread for his proud and fallen majesty
A regal couch magnific and stupend,
So he, unconscious of the ruin impending,
Sat.

It would be remarked infallibly that not only were these passages meaningless (as, indeed, they are), but that the authors were mere imitators of Swinburne and Milton, the mechanical quality of whose imitations made it unmistakably clear that they were incapable of writing anything worth reading. There are many writers, in fact, who, whenever they sit down to write, have other people's tunes running in their heads so persistently that their thoughts fall involuntarily into the ready-made framework, which — as they are not the thoughts of the man who made the framework — they do not in reality quite fit. It is very easy, if you are at all well-read, to compose on this plan. If you are content to be an imitator, you may safely adopt Sterne's recipe of writing down one sentence and trusting to God for the next. The Lord will provide. The flow will come. Every word has hallowed associations, every sound has familiar sequences, every situation has established developments: you may go ahead like a house on fire. But the result might as well be in the house on fire.

The Limits of Imitation

The undesirable and damning form of imitation may be defined as Parody which is not Meant to be Funny. And the species of it which is most common is Parody not of one writer, but of a whole bundle of writers. This kind is often missed by critics with an inadequate knowledge of the body of modern literature, though in process of time it is always discovered. In any age there is always a large mass of verse and of prose which imitates everybody who has gone just before. A sort of stock compost of manner and matter is produced; all can grow the flower, for all have got the seed. You read a hundred novels and concoct a hundred and first, which is the G.C.M. of them all. I think as I write of a certain kind of descriptive passage to be found almost anywhere. Scores of novelists write it, each using a formula without realizing that he is using a formula. This is the kind of thing:

"Evening came quietly over. The outlines of things, of houses and trees and hedges, softened and dimmed in the fading light. Low in the west a single streak of flaming orange still proclaimed the sunken sun. The fields were empty. The last labourer had gone home. A deserted plough, which seemed to accentuate the solitude, stood by the nearest of the gnarled and forlorn file of pollard willows that marked the course of the stream. A little breeze shivered the leaves, and fell away again. An owl hooted; and, from some distant village, a dog barked"

Or:

"The storm was approaching. From north and west furious black battalions of clouds, their edges ragged like the banners of a desperate army, flew to mid-heaven for the fray. The wind had died suddenly down, and there was a queer stillness over the fields; and objects stood out with a strange clearness in the intensified air. Against the dark background of Billericay Woods the gold vane of Billericay Church, etc."

Now this kind of description was not always stale or valueless. Deliberately foolish as the above two examples are, even they could not have been written by an Elizabethan. There is something in them that he would not have thought of, an attitude and a progress of the sentences. They are dated, within limits. But they are machine-made; like millions of others of the same kind, they are rubbish. And it is a bad thing to be taken in by such stuff.

But why do I labour? Am I a Professor of Tübingen that I should even set one foot upon the road that leads men to write volumes on the Hundred Species of Plagiarism and the Fundamentals of the Original and the Derivative in Art? Why should one argue till one is black in the face? All one can really say is that the wind bloweth where it listeth, and that sometimes it bloweth through a hole and cometh out as mere wind.

Mr. Lloyd George as a Vers-Librist

BOOKS about Mr. Lloyd George have been pouring from the press ever since he became Prime Minister. The oddest that I have seen is *The Wit and Wisdom of Lloyd George,* by Dan Rider. It is an anthology of Mr. George's sagest observations and most effective *mots.* Very few politicians could go through the process of anthologizing unscathed, and I cannot say that Mr. George's tit-bits are as effective when they are extracted from their contexts and laid coldly on paper as they were when we first heard them. Mr. Rider, however, has no such doubts. To him Mr. George is a warrior-bard, " in the direct line of the old Welsh tradition and spiritually akin to the House of David." Impressed by " the rhythmic quality of his utterance, his eloquent pauses and his poetic imagery — that artistic shell wherein he packs the high explosive of his thought," he has

" ventured to arrange that parts of some of his speeches shall be presented in the form of free verse, into which they fall naturally."

It was to these, of course, that one turned first.

The longest of them is a poem on Great Britain, of which I can only give the first two stanzas. These go thus:

This is a great country,
A country with a good many natural advantages.
That it is an island is not a matter to be despised,
Be thankful there is a fine old moat round this castle,
Don't take advantage of that to do nothing,
Work all the harder for gratitude that you have got it,
Work all the harder to preserve it.
They are trying to bridge it,
They are trying to make it impossible for us to use it,
Defend your island.
Defend the moat that is round it.

This is a rich land,
Rich in its soil,
Rich in the deposits under its soil,
Rich in its people,
Rich in its past,
Rich in its present,
God knows what riches there are in its future —
That depends upon its people today.
This is a great land.
It has the possession of a great past,
Which the struggles of generations for freedom have matured into the traditions of liberty,
That have enriched it, and have ennobled its institutions,
And dignified its people.

I hardly think that it comes up to the Psalmist, and I feel that the rhythmical effect is rather that of the improvising speaker who repeats himself whilst waiting for the next thought to occur. But one cannot help being struck with the close resemblance between a prose speech thus printed and the ordinary advanced "poems" one sees in American magazines. If Mr. George is a poet, it is rather to Ezra than to David that one must look for his filiation.

The above extract, however, is not representative of Mr. George at his most rhetorical. When he really gets going he almost invariably employs more imagery than this. And he has two sorts of imagery, the ordinary and the perorational. The ordinary may come from anywhere; from the motor-car, the aeroplane, the coal-mine, or the tavern. His range is futuristic in comparison with that, say, of Mr. Churchill or Lord Curzon, both of whom are good at dignified Victorian imagery. When he is in high spirits he is sometimes as fertile as Hudibras, who

could not ope
His mouth but out there flew a trope.

It is at these times, when he is making light play with miscellaneous metaphors, that he is at his best and most amusing. I cannot agree with those who think he comes off when he is really laying himself out to be solemn or sublime. The odd forced rasp that comes into his voice at those times is reflected

in a certain hollowness of language. And the paucity of what I have called his perorational imagery gives a clue. His fancy is no longer working; instead of seeing the similitudes of things, he employs stock decorations which he believes to be fitting: and, looking for something grand, he is almost invariably driven back to the mountains and the rills of "my own little country." These turn up with monotonous iteration. The most high-sounding peroration Mr. George ever delivered was that of his speech at Queen's Hall, September 19th, 1914. And it illustrated more strikingly than any the absence of that poetical quality of which Mr. Rider talks. The Welsh mountains appeared for the hundredth time, and the language — directly the lower levels of argument and satire had been left — is astonishingly thin. The most characteristic thing, perhaps, was the constant return to the word "great," which, after being absent for pages, does duty in every sort of connection in the last paragraphs. In the very last paragraph of all we get "great mountains," "great spectacle," "great everlasting things," "great peaks," "great pinnacle," "great mountain peaks," and "great war." It is almost his only great adjective. He does try to be Biblical sometimes. In the celebrated Paris speech he used the unnatural word "yea" twice. Each time it gave one shudders down the back.

I do not think that Mr. Rider has done justice to his subject's humour. The reader could have done

with some more of his best forgotten satirical passages in lieu of such *mots* as:

" The average Briton is too shy to be a hero until he is asked."

" Drink is doing us more damage in the war than all the German submarines put together."

" The land is the bountiful mother that gives to the children of men sustenance, security, and rest."

" If you fill the lungs of the children with good air, you empty the purses of the parsons of good gold."

" I should like to create a campaign against snobbishness. It would purge the nation."

Even such of these remarks as are sound are not so brilliant as to be peculiarly Lloyd-Georgian. " It is singularly unfair that future generations should have to bear the brunt of expenditure incurred by their forefathers " is a quotation that the friends of taxation might recall, and the passages about the miserable amount we spend on education are still highly relevant. But I begin to impinge upon political controversy. Leaving the merit or demerits of Mr. George's character, opinions and policy out of account, I must say that, although I enjoy his speeches as " turns," I have never thought them very striking as literature, and that Mr. Rider's collection does them much less than justice. I must therefore close by not recommending it.

William Cartwright

IN the seventeenth century there were several writers who had great contemporary reputations but have since been unduly neglected. Cleveland is one; Cartwright is another; Randolph, a Cambridge don, who died young and who really had the makings of a great writer in him, is a third. In recent years an edition of Cleveland has been published in America; Randolph was edited, in a comprehensive but characteristically slovenly way, by the late W. C. Hazlitt, and now there appears (Cambridge University Press) an edition of Cartwright's poems by Mr. R. C. Goffin, who dates his preface from Gauhati, Assam.

William Cartwright was born in 1611, took holy orders, and died, a fervent Royalist, in 1643, at Oxford. King Charles went into mourning for him; he had dazzled all his contemporaries with his grace and learning. His scholarship was, by the standards of his time, universal; he was personally charming; he was a fine preacher; and he wrote before he was twenty-five a large number of poems. Whatever merits may be found in the best of them no modern reader is likely to find them as a whole as good as his friends thought them. But he was a fascinating prodigy, and even his least meritorious work is sufficiently interesting to carry one on.

A good deal of it is interesting chiefly on account of its defects. Mr. Goffin may go too far when he says the " metaphysicals " as a group were " all head and no heart." That statement would have to be qualified considerably before it could be applied to Donne, to Crashaw or to Vaughan. But it can be applied almost as it stands to Cartwright, whose works are almost entirely exercises in intellectual ingenuity. In a few songs, sensual or delicately fanciful, he escapes from his conceits and writes naturally and musically; and in a few personal addresses he speaks directly and with feeling, notably in the passage in which he congratulates the Queen on bravery in face of danger. Sometime his fancies go trippingly, as in:

Tell me who taught thy subtle Eyes
To cheat true hearts with fallacies?
Who did instruct thy Sighs to Lie?
Who taught thy kisses Sophistry?
Believe 'tis far from honest Rigour;
O how I loath
A tutor'd oath!
I'l ne'er come nigh
A learned Sigh,
Nor credit vows in Mood and Figure.

And, rarely, one finds in him a stray touch of sublimity, as in that image in which he symbolizes the broken residue of a dream that is left to us when we wake from the dream:

As Nilus sudden Ebbing, here
Doth leave a scale, and a scale there,
And somewhere else perhaps a Fin,
Which by his stay had Fishes been;
So Dreams, which overflowing be,
Departing leave Half-things. . . .

But as a rule his "game of similes" is so fantastic that whatever pleasure we find in them, it is not the pleasure we get from poetry. His *Gnat* shows his cleverness at its highest and just comes off. He cannot congratulate a friend on a son and heir without beginning:

Y' are now transcrib'd, and Publike View
Perusing finds the Coppy true,
Without Erratas new crept in,
Fully Complete and Genuine;
And nothing wanting can espy,
But only Bulk and quantity;

and this is simple compared to his effort on the *Great Frost.* A few of his poems are deliberately humorous. *The Bill of Fare,* on living in a shortage, would have been topical not long ago had Tirpitz had his way. The meal for twenty men consists of:

Imprimis *some Rice Porredge, sweet, and hot,*
Three knobs of Sugar season the whole Pot.
Item, *one pair of Eggs in a great dish,*
So ordered that they cover all the Fish.

Item, *one gaping Haddock's Head, which will*
At least afright the Stomach, if not fill.
Item, *one thing in Circles, which we take*
Some for an Eele, but the Wiser for a Snake.

Follows a description of a congregation's mouth watering while the preacher talks about the fatted calf that was killed for the Prodigal Son.

Mr. Goffin's edition is a careful one, and his preliminary reading, although he does not parade it, has clearly been extensive. He gives variants and his notes hit the happy mean between inadequacy and superfluity. One cannot but regret, however, that a critical editor of Cartwright having turned up for the first time in over 250 years he did not do the job once and for all by covering the whole field. As things are, he has limited himself in such a way that some one will still have to produce a complete edition. It is not only that he has left out Cartwright's plays, the largest portion of his work. He has also — though one does not know, of course, what restrictions as to space may or may not have been imposed on him — omitted the preliminary matter to the 1651 edition, which is so voluminous and interesting that no reprint could be really satisfactory which lacked it. The preface (in which Donne is referred to as "the highest Poet our language can boast of") is good, but it is far outweighed in importance by the mass of commendatory poems which follow it. I do not think that the collected edition

of any English writer is accompanied by tributes at once so numerous and so interesting by virtue of their origin. There are about fifty of these eulogistic epitaphs; amongst their authors being "Orinda," Vaughan, Brome, Sherburne, James Howell, Izaak Walton, and Jasper Mayne, who remarks, *inter alia,* "in thee Ben Jonson still held Shakespeare's quill." The rear is brought up by Hum. Moseley, the publisher who modestly observes:

I say Amen to all, like a glad Cleark
(For those that cannot write may make their Mark).

and then, getting to business, concludes with:

Six hundred pages of good Wit? Read, try it;
Would all that cannot mend this Book would buy it.

Which would make a very good inscription for a title-page. As an afterthought Moseley (who had almost a monopoly of verse-publishing in his time) adds a Postscript:

"We shall not trouble you with an Index, for already the Book is bigger than we meant it, although we chose this Volume and Character purposely to bring down its bulk. The Printer's faults (such as they are) must lye at his own door; for the written Coppy was very exact. But (to save you that labour) the next Page tells you his Errata."

This was written before men learned to sink their personalities in their trades.

On Submitting Manuscripts

I WAS staying with a man who was "submitting" (as they call it) a manuscript to a paper. He was not used to this sort of thing, and he asked what he should say to the editor in the accompanying note. A mere perfunctory announcement of the fact that he was enclosing a manuscript and a stamped addressed envelope for its return seemed to him brusque, uncivil, inhuman. I suggested that what the person at the other end wanted to see — if he wanted to see anything — was his manuscript, not his letter, which would in any case have no bearing on the merits of his work; and that, as a matter of fact, especially as there was a paper shortage, he would do best to waste no notepaper at all, but to send the manuscript, the stamped envelope and nothing else. I believe it was good advice.

In the back of his mind, I think, was the idea that if he wrote an obviously intelligent, even sprightly, letter, the editor on whom he was bestowing his attentions would realize at once that he was dealing with an unusual individual and read the manuscript with double the care which would otherwise have been spent upon it. It is a common delusion. I remember that when I sent to a paper the first of the few bow-at-a-venture contributions I have ever at-

tempted, I informed the recipient that if he did not like what I sent he could throw it into the fire — where, possibly, it went. I suppose that I thought that remark had a certain *panache* about it; but I little knew how many hundreds of other authors annually make the same remark. It happens that since then I have at various times seen a number of letters which both editors and publishers have received with manuscript from strangers, and it is odd how well-defined are the classes into which they fall.

Many of them spring from an awkward feeling that something must be said; some from a feeling that compliments may bring forth good fruit; some perhaps from a suspicion that pressure may be applied. But it is not, as a rule (unless you know your particular editor's weaknesses), much use to say, " Dear Sir,— I should be glad if you would print the enclosed verses. I may add that I am a second-cousin of the Duke of Dorset." There is little point in saying, " Don't bother to return this if you can't use it; it can go into your waste-paper basket," since hundreds of other people per diem are writing the same sort of thing; and a similar objection applies to statements that one would rather one's stuff appeared in " your admirable pages " than in any of the comparatively inferior pages of the paper's contemporaries.

One class of these covering letters was discussed by Thackeray in his *Roundabout Papers*. He was

editing the *Cornhill,* and he found that his bed was strewn with thorns. His lot was worse than most; for he was so well known that piles of MSS. used to be addressed to his private residence, although he advertised in his magazine that contributions should only be sent to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. He reprinted one of the numerous appeals *ad misericordiam* which he said he had received. It ran as follows:

" Camberwell, June 4.

" Sir,— May I hope, may I entreat, that you will favour me by perusing the enclosed lines, and that they may be found worthy of insertion in the *Cornhill Magazine?* We have known better days, sir. I have a sick and widowed mother to maintain, and little brothers and sisters who look to me. I do my utmost as a governess to support them. I toil at night when they are at rest, and my own hand and brain are alike tired. If I could add but *a little* to our means by my pen, many of my poor invalid's wants might be supplied, and I could procure for her comforts to which she is now a stranger. Heaven knows it is not for want of *will* or for want of *energy* on my part that she is now in ill-health, and our little household almost without bread. Do — do cast a kind glance over my poem, and if you can help us, the widow, the orphans will bless you! — I remain, Sir, in anxious expectancy, your faithful servant,

" S. S. S."

I do not suppose that Thackeray actually did receive

this letter; he would scarcely have had the bad taste to reprint it if it had been genuine. More probably it was the common measure of a large number of similar ones. It hurt him, he said, to have these people "calling for bread which I can give them if I choose," when he knew that he could only "choose" by betraying his editorial trust and printing unsuitable literature.

Covering letters to publishers must, I suppose, usually be written. There are so many things to be stated: willingness or unwillingness to cut, desire to have MSS. back in two weeks if not acceptable, and so on. There is also, in many cases, something to be said about finance. The chastest example of this that I can remember was the letter that Shelley, when at school, wrote to Messrs. Longmans concerning his first novel. It is to be presumed that he wanted to suggest that he was ready, if necessary, to pay for its publication, and that pride, or an uncharacteristic caution, prevented him from saying so in terms. This was the letter that left Royal Henry's shades:

"Eton College, May 7, 1809.

"GENTLEMEN,

"It is my intention to complete and publish a Romance, of which I have already written a large portion, before the end of July. My object in writing it was not pecuniary, as I am independent, being the heir of a gentleman of large fortune in the county

of Sussex, and prosecuting my studies as an Oppidan at Eton; from the many leisure hours I have, I have taken an opportunity of indulging my favourite propensity in writing. Should it produce any pecuniary advantages, so much the better for me, I do not expect it. If you would be so kind as to answer this, direct it to me at the Rev. George Bethell's. Might I likewise request the favour of secrecy until the Romance is published.

"I am

"Your very humble servant,

"PERCY SHELLEY."

"Be so good as to tell me whether I shall send you the original manuscript when I have completed it or one corrected, etc."

Messrs. Longmans observed that they would "be happy to see the MS." But they did not publish it, and the "pecuniary advantages" certainly were not "produced."

Mr. H. G. Wells and Lord Tennyson

I HAVE been reading Mr. Wells's book *The Undying Fire,* and I certainly agree with those who call it the best book he has written since his early scientific romances and *A Modern Utopia.* But when I was reading it something kept on whispering " Where have I recently gone through all this argument somewhere else? " I then remembered that a few months ago I had returned to that great, if uneven, poem *In Memoriam;* and it was at once plain that, though it may not be possible to call Mr. Wells the Lord Tennyson of this age, Tennyson in that poem had conducted almost exactly the same argument as Mr. Wells in almost exactly the same way. Let me make a few extracts.

The most passionate and eloquent parts of Mr. Huss's discourse are those in which he describes the blankness of a godless universe and the horrible cruelties of Nature " red in tooth and claw." " What was most in my thoughts on that day when the world of Nature showed its teeth to me was the wretchedness of animal life ":

" It was as if the universe had put aside a mask it

had hitherto worn, and shown me its face, and it was a face of boundless evil. . . . It was as if a power of darkness sat over me and watched me with a mocking gaze, and for the rest of that day I could think of nothing but the feeble miseries of living things. I was tortured, and all life was tortured with me."

Tennyson's passages on evolution need no quoting. If, he said, man's place in Nature was what it seemed in these words, if he

Who roll'd the psalm to empty skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer

is to end in ineffective dust, he is:

A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tear each other in the slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

Or, as Mr. Wells puts it:

"If right and wrong are to perish together indifferently, if there is aimless and fruitless suffering, if there opens no hope for an eternal survival in consequences of all good things, then there is no meaning in such a belief in Christianity."

We notice here a slight difference. Mr. Wells un-

obtrusively slips in that "in consequences," presumably to shelve what to Tennyson was "the larger hope" of personal immortality. But the vision is the same and the reaction much the same. Mr. Huss (facing the spectres of the mind, as Tennyson put it) feels at moments that

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws,
To drop head foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

To the brooding mind of Mr. Huss it seems that perhaps we have made a god in our own image, and that

"where we had thought a God, somehow akin to ourselves, ruled in the universe, it may be there is nothing but black emptiness and a coldness worse than cruelty."

That horrible doubt appears early in *In Memoriam:*

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands —
With the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own,
A hollow form with empty hands."

The animate world is a shambles; all things pass. The diagnosis and the treatment are similar; we even find that both Tennyson and Mr. Wells, imaginative men, when surveying the processes of evolution, are struck by the splendour and pride and pitiful transience of those larger monsters which preceded man. In two of the most eloquent of his pages Mr. Wells admires the magnificence of "Behemoth in a thousand forms, Demotherium, Titanotherium, Helladotherium," creatures which were in some regards finer and more powerful than we, but which have nevertheless passed, "and we wax in our turn. . . . How can we at last escape the common fate?" Tennyson — in a sort of overflow passage embodied in *Maude* — was arrested by a similar thought:

A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth;
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million ages have gone to the making of man.
He now is first. But is he the last? Is he not too base?

But there comes an escape from these self-torturings; and the escape is the same to both.

Mr. Wells, or rather his Mr. Huss, confronted with the horrors of Nature, says:

" If there is no God, no mercy, no human kindness in the great frame of space and time, if life is a writhing torment, an itch upon one little planet, and the stars away there in the void no more than huge empty flares, signifying nothing, then all the brighter shines the God in my heart."

To Tennyson, too, at moments Time seemed

a maniac scattering dust
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

But, amplifying, he falls back on the same fountain of courage:

I found him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep
I heard a voice " Believe no more "
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the godless deep;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd " I have felt."

And starting from that firm basis both Mr. Wells and Tennyson find that they have discovered a starting-point for regenerative effort.

The end of our struggle here, concludes Mr. Wells, is to remould surely in the light of service, " to draw all men together out of themselves into one common life and effort with God." Only through the will of men can the race greater than man come. The lesson of the war should be that men, inspired by the Divine courage, should say: " This and all such things must end." " Social truth shall spread," cried the voice of Tennyson's comforter, Love; he saw in all things " toil co-operant to an end "; he watched Titanic maidens who stood:

As one would sing the death of war
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be.

And though Tennyson's theology does not separate " the God in the Heart " from all without, and though superficially he appears to regard the desired processes as automatic, I don't think that at bottom he is any more complacent or less encouraging than Mr. Wells.

The Statistics of Genius

SOME years ago Mr. Havelock Ellis published a Study of British Genius, in which he investigated the ancestry and characteristics of eminent men born in these islands. I cannot at the moment recall — but there is no necessity — any of the conclusions at which he arrived, save only that he stated that my own country was very prolific in geniuses and that its products were of a uniquely brilliant, adventurous and fascinating type. Inspired, apparently, by his example and by that of Monsieur Odin, who has made a similar study of eminent Frenchmen, Professor Edwin Leavitt Clarke has now written a book, *American Men of Letters: Their Nature and Nurture,* which appears as No. 1, Vol. LXXII., of the Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law.

Professor Clarke (who dedicates his book " to my Father and Mother, to whom I owe the Nature and Nurture which made this Study possible ") takes the thousand leading American men of letters born in or before 1850 and subjects them to a very elaborate scrutiny. He is less fortunate than Mr. Ellis and Professor Odin in having to draw his materials from a brief period of time and a community which has

thus far been relatively infertile of first-class men. He had to have a large number for the sake of his statistics, but many of them must be very small fry. Of the whole 1000 names only 91 are known to me (an intelligent foreigner), including those of Mrs. Eddy, W. L. Moody and Ira D. Sankey, and others of the sort, besides names like H. Timrod and Jones Very, casual mentions of which have stuck in my memory merely because they are odd. But they appear to have been selected on sound principles; they *are* the thousand best obtainable; and Professor Clarke's numerous tables with regard to their origin, upbringing, connubial state and so on are as careful and exhaustive as the lay reader could wish them to be.

The thousand includes a certain number of librarians, erudite men, actors, orators, publicists, popularizers, bibliophiles and patrons (*e.g.,* Pierpont Morgan), besides the more numerous writers of history, novels, essays and poems. Nine " important environmental conditions " are considered. These are: " (1) Social environment, by which is meant the ideals and customs of a group at any given time and place; (2) geographic environment; (3) local environment; (4) education; (5) economic condition of parents; (6) occupation of father; (7) occupation of the literati themselves; (8) early religious training; and (9) birth-rank in the family of brothers and sisters." The investigation of these " forces of nurture " leads to the production of many interest-

ing, if few surprising, facts. American literary fecundity (the dates are birth-dates) was at its highest in the decade 1791–1800, which produced "twenty-three authors per million." The rate was "practically constant" for twenty years more; fell off by 40 per cent. in 1821–'30, and thereafter steadily declined. Professor Clarke divides his people into "men of talent" (higher class) and "men of merit," and says that the proportion of the former to the latter has declined. The influences which have militated against authorship have apparently most strongly affected men of exceptional ability; perhaps the "men of superior ability were the first to sense the baneful influence of approaching philistinism." The proportion of literary women has increased; in itself, as the Professor observes, a tribute to the power of environmental conditions. In all but one of the departments of literary activity New England produced more literati, in proportion to population, than any other group of States. The one exception was the drama; and here the Puritan influence may be traced. "As a whole, authors appeared most frequently, and showed the greatest skill and versatility, when their contemporaries were in sympathy with their work." The importance of the Southern States was slight.

It was found, in respect of education, that 50.6 per cent. of all the persons catalogued had received a full college course. The proportion is even higher than one would have thought likely; and though it declined, it did not decline largely. The professional

classes, especially clergyman and lawyers, produced many times their proportionate number of literary persons. "The class of mechanics, clerks and labourers produced relatively very few men of letters." "If relative numbers are considered, the Unitarian body apparently had the greatest proportion of literary persons born within its ranks, and the Congregationalists, Friends and Universalists followed in order." First-born children are rather more frequently literary, in almost every size of family, than would have seemed probable. So, also, were last-born children. And explanations suggest themselves for this. As to "nationality strain" no fewer than 93.8 per cent. of the 1000 were British and 1.4 Irish. This proportion is fairly representative of the estimated proportion in the whole population up to 1840 or so.

Professor Clarke's conclusion is explained in a comprehensible if scarcely audacious simile. Nature is likened to seed and nurture to ground: —

"A combination of either good ground and poor seed or poor ground and good seed will produce a better crop than when poor seed is sown on poor ground. No good crop is ever produced, however, without the use of both good seed and good ground. In like manner gifted children who lack opportunity, and dull children who possess every opportunity, achieve far more than dull children who lack favourable conditions of environment."

Galton and L. F. Ward were both right in insisting respectively on breeding and nurture, and "the sociologist is justified in advocating, with all the force at his command, the extension of those fundamental American privileges, economic and social opportunity and education, by means of which all the innate ability which exists may be given the environment necessary for its maximum development." It is extraordinary — or rather, it is not extraordinary — how often statistical inquiries confirm the conclusions of common observation and reasoning. I remember seeing hefty great tables which proved conclusively that slum children are not so tall and heavy as public-school boys. But such tables are very useful as against people who can be convinced by no other means.

It may be added that Professor Clarke says little about the production of the highest forms of genius. He quotes with approval some one who says that great genius is the perfect fruit from a twig which has grown in perfect conditions. He allows it to be deduced from scattered sentences that he does not expect much great genius from America in its present transitional chaos. If not a settled order, at least a strong and coherent body of doctrine or a powerful wave of emotion infecting the community or a compact part of it is, he appears to suggest, wanted. But this is a more academic matter. We may be able to give people better food and education, but we are not yet equipped with efficient schemes for pro-

ducing religious unanimity or intense spiritual atmospheres. Some part of man's environment will always escape our deliberate regularization. We ought not to be sorry.

Coleridge at Table

WHEN Mr. Max Beerbohm produced a volume of caricatures entitled *The Poet's Corner,* he thought he could best represent Coleridge by showing him laying down the law at an originally festive board, his rapt eyes shining upwards, oblivious of the fact that his companions are all snoring hard, with their mouths open and their cheeks on each other's shoulders. Coleridge's proclivities as a talker are, of course, notorious; everybody has heard of the dialogue between him and Lamb: "I think, Charles, that you never heard me preach." "My dear boy, I never heard you do anything else." The fact that his *Table Talk* — which was first published in 1835 by his nephew, Henry Nelson Coleridge — has not been very widely read in this generation may be due to a misapprehension of these stories. For Coleridge, though he often talked boringly and incomprehensibly, usually talked far too long, and invariably monopolized what only a fantastic courtesy could call a conversation, was at his best one of the best talkers on record.

The last reprint of the *Table Talk* with which I am acquainted is that (1884) in Henry Morley's Universal Library, a most interesting series much

handicapped by the criminal smallness of its print. A new edition has been published by the Oxford University Press. It includes, as Morley's reprint did not include, Coleridge's *Omniana* (contributed to an 1812 volume of Southey's) and supplementary Table Talk from Alsop's Recollections of 1836. By way of preface there appears H. N. C.'s original introduction and a paper written in 1886 for the *St. James' Gazette* by Coventry Patmore. Patmore remarks that Coleridge's table talk was his best prose work; the finest thoughts in his books "shine only as the more lustrous points of luminous nebulæ, in his recorded conversations glitter as brightly and distinctly as stars in a frosty night." Patmore's quotations are mostly political quotations selected because they fortified his own convictions, *e.g.:*

"I have never known a trader in philanthropy who was not wrong in heart somewhere or other. Individuals so distinguished are usually unhappy in their family relations — men not benevolent or beneficent to individuals, but almost hostile to them, yet lavishing money and labour and time on the race, the abstract notion. The cosmopolitism which does not spring out of, and blossom upon, the deep-rooted stem of nationality or patriotism, is a spurious and rotten growth."

The first part of this is rather too sweeping a generalization, but the truth about almost all politicians in all ages reposes in another:

"See how triumphant in debate and in action O'Connell is! Why? Because he asserts a broad principle, and acts up to it, rests all his body on it, and has faith in it. Our ministers — true Whigs in that — have faith in nothing but expedients *de die in diem.*"

But it is misleading to fasten particularly on his political remarks, for almost every subject in this world and the other was canvassed by him and he had an amazing faculty for linking up subjects not commonly associated and drawing illustrations from the most surprising sources.

I may give a few examples of some of the kinds of things he said:

"A rogue is a roundabout fool.

"Our theatres — Drury Lane and Covent Garden — are fit for nothing: they are too large for acting, and too small for a bull-fight.

"The Reformation in the sixteenth century narrowed Reform. As soon as men began to call themselves names, all hope of further amendment was lost.

"The best way to bring a clever young man who has become sceptical and unsettled to reason, is to make him *feel* something in any way. Love, if sincere and unworldly, will, in nine cases out of ten, bring him to a sense and assurance of something real and actual; and that sense alone will make him *think*

to a sound purpose, instead of dreaming that he is thinking."

There are hundreds of Coleridge's acutest literary judgments in these pages; and in few, I think, would the common sense of posterity differ from him. There are also some excellent light poems (including two on the bad smells of Cologne) and many anecdotes. I would recommend this book to any one who is not too lazy to think, but likes to do his thinking without systematic solemnity.

Fragments of China

A CORRESPONDENT in China, noting a reference I made to School Magazines, sends me some numbers of *The Yellow Dragon,* the magazine of Queen's College, Hongkong. Most of the boys appear to be Chinese, and East meets West pretty intimately in the school chronicles. The form is the usual form; there is a Latin poem, there are accounts of football matches and a chess tournament; but after much that is familiar one suddenly comes across the announcement that the Headmaster has received the following letter from a gentleman apologizing for the absence of two boys from school:

"DEAR SIR,— Having instantly received the awful tidings that Cheuk Yuk Ling, in class Full 3 A and Cheuk Yuk Tat, in class 7, have been both kidnapped by thieves when visiting their ancestors' tombs, I beg you to kindly grant them a few days of absence as they will be ransomed in a short time. As soon as they are freed they will attend to school."

Curiously, another correspondent in China sends me almost simultaneously two cuttings from the *Central China Post.* One of them is a notice which could have appeared nowhere in the world but in that suavest of countries:

"To Carpet Buyers."

"Mr. Tien Chun-chien of the Tien Chang Carpet Company, No. 36 San Teh Li, French Concession, begs to request his patrons to call before nine in the morning or after half-past four in the afternoon when he will have the pleasure of attending to them personally, as he fears that they may be overcharged by his assistants."

But the other is, unhappily, merely an Oriental version of a universal tragic story. It is a letter to the Editor: it is headed "Yangtze Scenery and Japanese Advertisements"; and it is one more proof of the readiness of the Japanese to imitate the worst features of our commercial civilization. It runs:

"Honourable Mister,— My friend have tell me just now you like that Japan pill notices in hills of Ichang. Any man can understand that pill notice in hills most highest unreason, certainly for cause that pills very perhaps wholesome I don't know for bloods and other internal juices of the interior body. Pill notice in hill very much confounded, walking men (and otherwise women) travelling in hills so can perspect the views. More proper can put Japan pill notice in bath rooms I think so very much. With you much kindness — Yours very friendly,

"P. Z. Tong.

"Wuchang, Aug. 31st."

My heart bleeds for Ichang.

Rupert Brooke in Retrospect

IN Rugby School Chapel there are tablets commemorating Matthew Arnold and Clough. There might also have been one to Landor. But Landor was expelled at an early age as an incorrigible. An incorrigible he was. He was afterwards sent down from Oxford for firing a gun into the rooms of a Tory undergraduate, which offence was made worse (it is said) because he refused to give an explanation. The mere fact that an institution has ejected a great man does not always prevent it from claiming credit for helping to shape him. Shelley was turned out of University College, Oxford, for firing a controversial blunderbuss (he at least would have been prepared to explain and defend his action indefinitely), but there is a vast memorial to him there: a creepy great marble model of his naked corpse lying under a hollow ceiling painted dark blue with stars on it, and intended (the visitor conceives) to represent the sky. Rugby has been more reserved. She has foregone Landor, but to Arnold and Clough she has now added Rupert Brooke, a tablet to whom was unveiled on March 29, 1919, by Sir Ian Hamilton.

Sir Ian's address was delivered under difficult conditions: in the chapel, where an audience is precluded

from making those signs of approval, and even disapproval, which, by filling up a speaker's pauses, help him to keep going. But its clarity and directness, and the happy choice of its words, impressed one when one heard it, and in print it seemed still better. Sir Ian suggested that Brooke's personality was even more remarkable than his work, which he had hardly begun. Brooke will be a legendary figure; when our generation has been long dead his personality will fascinate posterity; they will magnify him; a myth will gather around him; he will be one of those figures around whom creative literature is written. I think that is true; he was one of those men of whom one feels that accidents do not happen; that their personalities, without effort, compel their careers; men to whom " romantic " lives and deaths seem to come as naturally as its predestined passage to a flower. I thought of this as I was coming home, but when I got home I turned back to his work to see how I now found it.

I found it better than before, and especially the latest of it. In his lifetime and after his death too much attention, relatively, was given to the extravagances, the mild extravagances, of his youth. A great number of the poems in his first book were half-serious, over-emphasized exercises on themes chosen (however unconsciously) because they would annoy sentimentalists. Laughing audacities akin to these are to be found in the book on Webster. But it is a mistake to telescope a man's work; and it is especially

so when dealing with a man who bridged the gulf between precocity and maturity in a very few years and then died. Even in Brooke's earliest work, few though were the poems in his first book that would have lasted on their own merits, there was evident a technical mastery, which seldom failed, over the handling of verse, and the promise of an extraordinarily clear and straightforward style. If one puts these behind one and considers only the work of his last two or three years, one finds that style in full bloom, unstained by forced words or tricks of expression. No modern man has written prose more clear and charming than is to be found in the letters from America or the confession on the outbreak of war, a prose which most easily adapted itself both to the lightest raillery or irony and to the profoundest feelings of the heart, contemplating the universe and death. And his verse was the twin of his prose.

Time would have brought a fuller content; and, automatically, that larger volume of production which makes a man's powers so much more evident and definable. But any one who freshly reads his last work must, I think, agree that, emotionally and intellectually, Brooke had already found himself; and that he had actually perfected his instrument. His war-sonnets have been so quoted and requoted that, for the time being, the ear is dulled to them; but they were not all he had done in the sonnet form, and had he never written them, the others, for number and quality, exceed anything in the kind that any of his

contemporaries had done. I think the most beautiful is *The Busy Heart;* but how good are all those sonnets written in the Pacific! How easily, yet gravely, they progress to an inevitable end! Take the endings of them together and how well they stand:

And I recall, lose, grasp, forget again,
And still remember, a tale I have heard, or known;
An empty tale, of idleness and pain,
Of two that loved — or did not love — and one
Whose perplexed heart did evil, foolishly
A long while since and by some other sea.

So a poor ghost, beside his misty streams,
Is haunted by strange doubts, evasive dreams,
Hints of a pre-Lethean life, of men,
Stars, rocks, and flesh, things unintelligible;
And light on waving grass, he knows not when,
And feet that ran, but where, he cannot tell.

Spend in pure converse our eternal day;
Think each in each, immediately wise;
Learn all we lacked before; hear, know, and say
What this tumultuous body now denies;
And feel, who have laid our groping hands away;
And see, no longer blinded by our eyes.

They say that the Dead die not, but remain
Near to the rich heirs of their grief and mirth.
I think they ride the calm mid-heaven, as these,

In wise, majestic, melancholy train,
And watch the moon, and the still-raging seas
And men, coming and going on the earth.

In each of these cases the last line is perfect and detachable; yet it is patent that in none has the poet " written up to " the last line; it grows naturally out of what comes before. And in the phraseology of all these sonnets, in the (neglected) *Song* beginning:

All suddenly the wind comes soft,
And Spring is here again;
And the hawthorn quickens with buds of green,
And my heart with buds of pain,

and, indeed, in all the later poems, there is a large, assured simplicity of language, whatever is being said, that is peculiar to poets of the first order. His style reached full maturity in those fragments which Mr. Marsh appended to his Memoir, particularly the scattered lines from an unwritten poem on the approach of the Fleet to the Troad, lines like that in which the ghost of the Greek past hears " more than Olympian thunder on the sea " and that in which Achilles, aware of the great events impending, " moved the great shades that were his limbs."

There is little of his best; but what there is of it could not be better. And it is worth remarking that the more he developed, the more lucid he became. There exists at present among most of our semi-good

poets (and not all our good ones are always free from it) a habit of writing in dark abracadabras which it is difficult to fathom. Profound thoughts and recondite images cannot always be fully grasped at first reading, and most good literature makes some demands upon the intelligence of the reader. But I think it may be postulated that, however multiple and deep may be the meanings of a poem or a phrase, it is the characteristic of all the greatest poetry that a surface meaning at least can be comprehended at sight. Brooke, in this regard, was a model; at the time of his death he was, without foregoing any thought that he wanted to express, the simplest and clearest of good English writers; he used no word and no construction that was beyond the range of intelligent English conversation. With such a personality, such a brain, and such a command over words and their order, he might, had he lived, have produced a body of work which would have stood beside that of Keats.

Mr. Max Beerbohm's Idyll

THERE is no law under which authors can be punished for insufficient output. If there were, Mr. Max Beerbohm would have a thin time. Since he left off writing dramatic criticisms for the *Saturday Review* he seems to have contracted the idea that a small book once in five years, and a short article or story once in two years, satisfactorily represent the extent of his duty to society. He does an occasional cartoon as well, and we should be grateful for that; but it is absurd that if one wants to say anything about him one should be driven to write about his old books. For he is one of the best parodists, essayists and critics alive, and every day scores of thoughts must go flitting across his mind which would be both salutary and enlivening to us if only he were not so unpardonably idle.

Mr. John Lane, possibly in despair about getting anything new out of him, has reprinted expensively with dexterous illustrations by George Sheringham, *The Happy Hypocrite,* one of Mr. Beerbohm's earliest "works." It looks odd in a large volume with illustrations and a herbaceous cover; it is the sort of story that should be printed in a format small and choice. But even if it were got up like a Blue-

Book or a Family Bible it would be welcome. It cannot be defined. It is a silly short story, a mad parable, a grotesque fairy tale, a ferocious burlesque, a fantastic pastiche. It reads as well now as it did in the 'nineties; and as well on tenth reading (judicious intervals allowed) as on first.

How could man open better than this:

"None, it is said, of all who revelled with the Regent, was half so wicked as Lord George Hell. I will not trouble my little readers with a long recital of his great naughtiness. But it were well they should know that he was greedy, destructive, and disobedient. I am afraid there is no doubt that he often sat up at Carlton House until long after bedtime, playing at games, and that he generally ate and drank far more than was good for him. His fondness for fine clothes was such that he used to dress on week-days quite as gorgeously as good people dress on Sundays. He was thirty-five years old and a great grief to his parents."

He was candid, and some maintained that his candour was a redeeming virtue:

"But, painful as it is to me to dissent from any opinion expressed by one who is now dead, I hold that Candour is good only when it reveals good actions or good sentiments, and that when it reveals evil, itself is evil, even also."

That last touch of preposterous and tautologous pomposity is characteristic.

The vein, for a while, is kept up:

"It is pleasant to record that many persons were inobnoxious to the magic of his title and disapproved of him so strongly that, whenever he entered a room where they happened to be, they would make straight for the door and watch him very severely through the keyhole."

The children knew him as King Bogey.

"It is true that his Lordship was a non-smoker — a negative virtue, certainly, and due, even that, I fear, to the fashion of the day — but there the list of his good qualities comes to an abrupt conclusion. He loved with an insatiable love the town and the pleasures of the town, whilst the ennobling influences of our English lakes were quite unknown to him. He used to boast that he had not seen a buttercup for twenty years. . . ."

"No card-player in St. James's cheated more persistently than he. As he was rich and had no wife and family to support, I can offer no excuse for his conduct." He would royster nightly at Garble's, with a dancer on his arm, "clad in Georgian costume, which was not then, of course, fancy dress, as it is now." But love and Miss Mere came; Lord

George was smitten at sight, sought the Fair behind the scenes, and fell on his knees before her "with a loud crash."

I will not detail the process which transformed Lord George Hell into Lord George Heaven: how he bought the beautiful and saintly mask to hide his degraded face; how his face changed; how, at the pastrycook's, he said: "Which are buns, Jenny; I should like to have one, too"; how "they were married according to the simple rites of a dear little registry office in Covent Garden"; how they hid from the world; how they celebrated the mensiversary of their wedding; and how they surmounted the last trial. The most remarkable thing to be noted, in my opinion, is the way in which Mr. Beerbohm, in the face of all his self-imposed difficulties, keeps one interested in his indescribably impossible characters, and makes one wish, as one should always wish, for a happy ending; and the effect he produces of having written a tale not farcical but beautiful.

The nearest thing to it that exists is its contemporary, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime,* that attractive story in which murder is treated as a thing which at best may be a duty, and at worst an extravagant but rather charming caprice. But that book lacks the peculiar fragrance of Mr. Beerbohm's. The era from which it sprang was one in which the commonest clichés were the clichés of Arcadia. Poets wrote lines on the model of "the viol, the violet, and the

vine"; and, what is odder, were praised for them. Pierrot and Columbine were driven very hard; the scenes of Watteau, usually viewed through the eyes of Verlaine, were everywhere reproduced. Leaden Cupids, on pedestals by sobbing fountains, watched fantastic lovers kissing in the moon; fauns lamented their misfortunes on their pipes; the jeunesse poudrée, with a deplorable lack of humour, sighed for Dresden shepherdesses and strawberries, for simplicity chapleted with roses; dandyisms and delicacies were accumulated from all the centuries, from Theocritus to Petronius, from Ronsard to Brummel and d'Orsay. It all falls very flat now; and one of the reasons is that it was only half, if half, meant, but was not said as though it were half meant; and the reaction against the cult has been so great that most modern writers are thoroughly afraid to use such a word as "roses." But, queerly, Mr. Beerbohm, the one man who treated the whole convention flippantly and used its stock materials as a parodist, succeeds in doing something permanently delightful with them. A man who cannot contemplate without boredom the weary prettiness of Dowson or the gluttonous philanderings of Richard le Gallienne, can find Mr. Beerbohm's Arcadianisms, in spite of — or rather because of — their ridiculous setting, charming and even touching in themselves. It is not altogether in mockery that he uses his porcelain words. As he does not believe that making decorations is the chief object of life, or attempt to pile on them a load which they cannot carry, he captivates

us, and I think himself, with them. He brings out all the stock properties with a wicked smile; but author and reader both end by saying: "But these things are rather delicious after all." What we are not asked to believe we believe. The grotesque ménage in St. James's Park, the pure and simple open-air amour, the repasts of seed-cake and dewberry wine, the fresh, bird-haunted dawns, the wild flowers and the ribbons, and the aged woodman who walked the woods by the Ken with faggots on his back: they are made credible because they are described in jest, and I at least always find the adventures of Lord George Hell and his blushing maid linger in the memory not as a piece of wild buffoonery but as a scented idyll.

Fire and the Heart of Man

IT was eleven o'clock at night. I was preparing to write an essay. I was going to write it about a book. The book was a good and a beautiful book; it filled me with the noblest thoughts, made me a better man and fit for the most heroic actions. It was full of sagacity, of sound reasoning, of imagination checked by sense, of reflection shot through with vision. It was not only a good book, but a large and solid book, a book to be chewed like the cud, remembered and returned to, a virtuous and courageous book, a book of mettle, a book of weight. Unfortunately, or fortunately, just as I had finished reading the book and was biting the end of my fountain-pen, wondering how in God's name I was to do it justice, I looked out of my attic window. The trees stood dark across the road; the river lay dark beyond the trees; but the light of the stars was not the only light. On the horizon, behind some trees and a house, glowing, reddening, rolling, there was a Fire.

There may be people who, when they see Fire in the distance, say, "Oh, what a pity! I hope the Insurance Company will not suffer heavily"; or, "What a waste of material!" There may be people who say, "There is a Fire"— and then go to

bed. There may even be people who say, "Well, what if there is a Fire?"— and turn grumpily to resume their discussion about the Ethics of Palæontology or the Finances of a Co-operative Kitchen. If such people exist, I am not among them. When I saw this Fire I ran downstairs as hard as I could pelt and knocked up a neighbour. I said to him, "There is a Fire. Look!" He answered, "By Jove! so there is." I said, "It may be twenty miles away or two miles away. The farther the bigger. If it is a long walk the compensation is proportionate." He said, "Wait a minute till I put on my boots." I said, "All right; but buck up or the Fire may die down." He hurried; and we started walking. We did not know whither we were walking. All we knew was, and this thought slightly depressed us, that the direction of the Fire put out of the question any hope that it was the Albert Memorial or the Queen Victoria Memorial that was in process of combustion.

We walked along the river, past the terrace and the cocoa-butter factory, and the nuns' school, and the creek, and the boathouses. The glare increased steadily as we went. When we reached the bridge it was in full view. An enormous factory was blazing away on the edge of the river below the bridge; the great span cut dark across the flames and the glow. As we climbed to the bridge we saw that there was a thin row of silent people leaning over the ironwork — looking at the Fire. The stars

were above them and the velvet dark sky; the river flowed below them; a few hundred yards away great flames and intervolved clouds of smoke poured out of a huge building, the top windows of which were almost intolerably bright. The roof had gone and the pillars of stonework between the windows looked like the pillars of some ruined Greek temple against a magnificent gold sunset. It was all gold and blue; the moving gold and the still, all-embracing blue; and the crowd said nothing at all. There was no sound except when a great stretch of masonry fell in, and then there was a swelling sigh like that which greets the ascent of a rocket at a firework display. There was a wind, and it was chill; we passed on over the bridge and descended to the tow-path on the opposite bank. Along that path we went until we were opposite the Fire. About eight people, very indistinct in the gloom, were scattered amongst the waterside bushes. In front of us a fire-boat took up its position. Below and around the Fire little lights flashed; there were lights above the river (which was at low tide); voices shouted terrifically from the other bank; voices, addressed to 'Arry, answered from the boat, and made reference to a line. An engine began working; hoses could be seen sending rising and falling sprays of water against a blaze that seemed capable of defying all the water in all the seas.

There we stood, watching. Only one sentence did we hear from our awed neighbours. There was

a man who in the darkness looked portly and moustached. He took his pipe out of his mouth and said, optimistically, "Nice breeze; it *ought* to fan it along." "Along" meant an enormous oil warehouse and wharf. Overhearing that remark, I told myself the truth. The moral man in me, the citizen, the patriot, were all fighting hard for supremacy. I was trying to say to myself: "This may mean ruin to somebody; you ought to pray that it should be got under at once"; and "How can you bear to see so much painfully-won material wastefully consumed?" and "This stuff would probably be useful at the Front; it has employed labour; its loss may be serious; its replacement may be difficult; Germany, Germany, Germany, Germany. . . ." But all that company of virtuous selves fought a losing battle. Aloud or in quietness I (or they) could say all this and much more; but the still, small voice kept on repeating, "Don't you be a humbug. It's no good. You *want* this Fire to spread. You want to forget what it all means. You will be disappointed if the firemen get it under. You would like to see the next place catch fire, and the next place, and the next place, for it would be a devil of a great display." Peccavi; that was certainly so.

They got it under. They cornered it. Flames gave way to a great smoke; the smoke grew and grew; the path and the bushes faded from red into the indistinct hue of the starlit night. The mental glow died down; we felt cold, and moved, and

walked towards home. And as we walked I meditated on the glory of Fire, fit subject for a poet, refreshment for the human spirit and exaltation for the soul. My emotions, when looking at it, had not been entirely base; I had felt, not merely a sensuous pleasure in the glories of that golden eruption under the blue roof of night, but wonder at the energies we keep under, their perpetuity and their source, and the grandeur of man, living amid so much vastness and power, valiantly struggling to cope with things greater than himself, save that they have no souls. And I thought that in the perfect and hygienic State where the firemen would find water, water, everywhere, where the Super-Hose would be in use, where everything would be built of fireproof materials, and where extinguishers of a capacity not conceived by us would be available as a last resort, the wise sovereign would set apart beautiful large buildings, all made of timber, filled with oil, tar and sugar, surrounded with waste land and fronted by a wide reflecting river, which would periodically be set on fire for the consolation and the uplifting of men. I don't want a big Fire made impossible.

And I wondered why it was that fire on a huge scale had never yet adequately inspired a poet. And then I thought that poets had, after all, done as yet very little, considering the materials that are daily displayed before them; and then I found great comfort and courage in the thought that the commonplace things, the things we all see and know, live by

and live with, have so far merely been skirted, and that the provinces which remain to be explored and described and celebrated by imaginative writers are endless, and that only corners have as yet been spied into.

THE END

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